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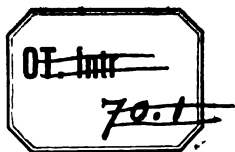
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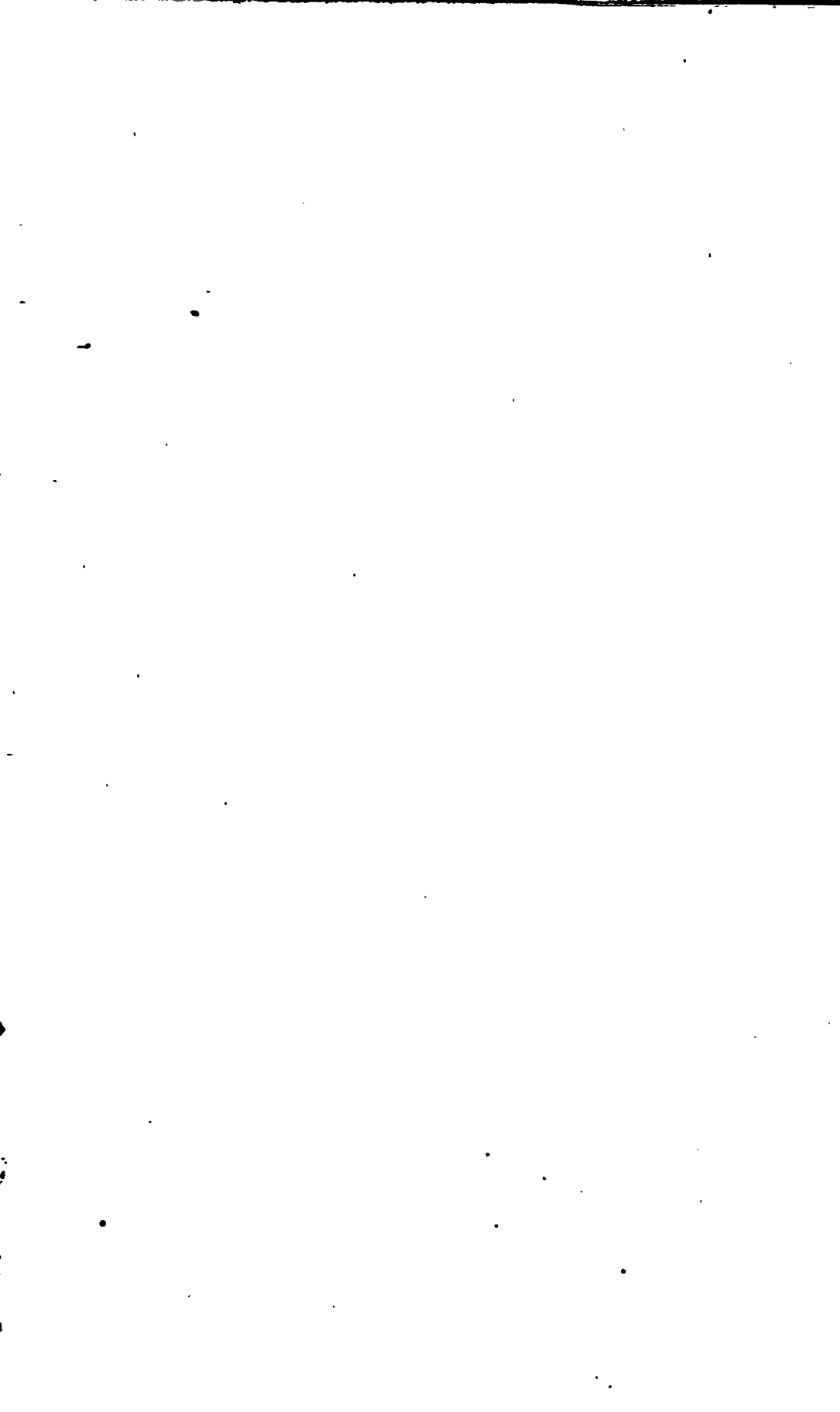


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ACADEMICAL LECTURES
ON THE
JEWISH SCRIPTURES AND ANTIQUITIES.
VOL. II.

2nd . 1898

From the Library of
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ACADEMICAL LECTURES
ON THE
JEWISH SCRIPTURES
AND
ANTIQUITIES.

By JOHN GORHAM PALFREY, D. D., LL. D.

VOL. II.
GENESIS AND PROPHETS.

*Γινεσθε δὲ δόκιμοι τραπεζίται, τὰ μὲν ἀποδοκιμάζοντες, τὸ δὲ
καλὸν κατέχοντες.*

CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS.

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PREFACE.

IN the argument contained in the second Lecture of this volume, I can scarcely be misunderstood, as proposing a theory of my own in respect to the *Creation*, or in respect to any subsequent diluvial changes. I am only treating of the purpose and meaning of Moses in preserving the accounts of those events, which we have in his book of Genesis. I by no means deny, that the first race of men which inhabited this planet was cut off, with a few exceptions, by a flood of water. I merely inquire, whether Moses is to be understood as having, or as pretending to have, supernatural information respecting this event, which supernatural information must, from its nature, have been correct in all its details. No one will imagine any doubt of the fact of the Creation to be implied in a denial of Moses' having had an extraordinary acquaintance with its circumstances. As little is the denial of an ancient universal deluge involved in the opinion, that Moses knew no more concerning it than what tradition had reported, and had a far different object from that of vouching for its occurrence.

From remarks in the twenty-sixth Lecture, and other parts of the volume, it will be seen, that I regard the books of the Law as standing upon very different ground, in point of authority, from the rest of the books in the Old Testament collection. Upon evidence which satisfies my mind, I recognise Moses as a teacher supernaturally instructed, and empowered to prove his divine mission by miraculous works; while I do not find proof that the other Hebrew writers had either received, or pretended to have received, supernatural communications or endowments of any kind.

The origin of the error, which confounded the later books, in point of authority, with those of the Law, I think is properly to be referred to the time, when, being forbidden, during the persecutions in the second century before our era, to read the Law in their synagogues, the Jews substituted the prophetical writings in the public services of the Sabbath. But, however this may be, I am satisfied that all the reasons of the case call for a discrimination between the Pentateuch and the later books, similar to that which the Reformers made between the writings of Apostles and Evangelists in the New Testament, and the works of the Fathers of the Church. I acknowledge two supernatural dispensations; the one, introduced by Moses; the other, by Jesus, and those whom he immediately commissioned and taught. The Catholic insists that the latter revelation was continued, with its proper attendant evidence

of miracle, through the subsequent ages ; but I cannot see that he produces proof of this, and accordingly, with all Protestants, I dissent. Catholic and Protestant alike affirm, that the former miraculous dispensation was not finished in the same age in which it was begun, but was still maintained through a thousand years ; and I withhold my assent equally from this proposition, on the same ground of the insufficiency of the evidence advanced in its behalf. To place the books of Kings, for instance, on a level with those of Moses, is to my mind no more reasonable, than to confound the authority of the writings of Eusebius, or of Ephrem the Syrian, with that of the Acts of the Apostles.

I am aware, that there is a part of the argument which I have not treated, and that the views which I present will encounter a strong prepossession, arising from the sense put by most readers upon passages in the New Testament containing references to, or quotations from, the Old. But it would have been impossible, without a great extension of the plan of this work, to introduce into it a discussion of questions belonging under this head. Nor would the two subjects, under any circumstances, admit of being advantageously discussed together. Questions of the sense which the New Testament attributes to the Old are strictly questions of New Testament exposition, and are only susceptible of being treated, when important principles, relating to that ex-

position, have been ascertained. Should my life be spared for three or four years, I hope, in a series of Notes upon the New Testament, already in an advanced stage of preparation, to develope my views of the bearing of the evangelical records upon the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Meantime, after making nine thorough examinations of the whole New Testament, in as many successive years, with a constant view to this point, I feel some confidence in expressing my conviction, that it presents no testimony whatever in opposition to the sentiments advanced in this volume. The Early Prophets are never referred to, by the authorized teachers of our religion in the New Testament, or in the discourses of Jesus and his ministers, in any other way than as imperfect records of profane history might be referred to, by those who regarded them in that light. Nor, either as to them or the later books, is any certificate given of supernatural authority, or even of universal, or even of general, correctness.

I have deviated, in this volume, from my original plan, in introducing some lectures upon a portion of the Later Prophets, and the principles of interpretation applicable to their writings, before completing the survey of the books of the Early Prophets. The notes upon the early history, which it will be observed form no less than a running commentary on the whole, and which were nearly all prepared while the Lectures were passing through the

press, had swelled to an entirely unexpected amount, and I was reluctant to consent to the delay which was likely to be occasioned by a similar treatment of the remaining books in the same division. In respect to the *Later Prophets*, I propose nothing of the kind, because of the very wide range, which a minute verbal commentary upon poetical compositions must needs take. Moreover, it seemed probable, that those who had regarded my views of the *Early Prophets* with any favor, might be disposed, previously to further illustrations of them, to attend to a general statement of the argument respecting the prophetical writings, more commonly so called, and to a few particular expositions of their sense. I hope, before the expiration of the present year, to publish another volume, completing the examination of the remaining writings under both these divisions.

In quotations from the poetical books, I have almost always followed the version of Dr. Noyes, incomparably the best translation of those books which exists in our language, and a work, that for ability and learning ranks with the most meritorious, which, in any department, this country has produced.

*Boston, Massachusetts;
January 20th, 1840.*

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ON THE

JEWISH SCRIPTURES AND ANTIQUITIES.

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DESIGN AND SOURCES OF GENESIS.

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WHOEVER should see reason to believe, that the book of Genesis was not composed by Moses, but was the work of some later and irresponsible writer, would find his labor as an interpreter of the Old Testament much abridged. If one may judge from the use which has been made of this book by the enemies of revelation, and the various hypotheses which have been resorted to on the other part, to reconcile

some of its contents with the discoveries of modern science, and other acknowledged facts, its exposition has been found attended with some peculiar embarrassments, which of course owe their importance to the opinion, that, Moses being its author, his credit, as a divine messenger, is implicated in the credibility of its statements.

I cannot, however, take refuge from this difficulty in a denial of the authenticity of Genesis as a work of Moses. The view which has come down to us from the earliest times, that furnish testimony upon the subject,—namely, that he composed the five books, or rather the one book divided into five sections,* which we call the Pentateuch,—I conceive to be particularly corroborated, as to Genesis, by some weighty considerations. The rude character of many of the views which it presents, particularly its *anthropomorphic* representations of the Deity, render it more unsuitable to be referred to a later age, than either of the other four books of the law; and the archaisms, which are adduced in proof of the antiquity of the whole Pentateuch, peculiarly abound in this part. But especially, I think, that a person, who has seen cause to ascribe the four following books to Moses, will not hesitate to attribute this, also, to him, after observing the subjects which it treats, and considering the connexion which they have with the subjects treated in the others; a connexion so close, that, on the one hand, many things in the latter books clearly need the narratives in Genesis to make them intelligible, and, on the other hand, the composition of the book of Genesis could not be satisfactorily accounted for, except on the ground of its having been intended to serve, in some way, for an introduction to the others.

* See Vol. I. pp. 25; 33; 75–77; 426, note.

I have thus glanced at the design of Genesis, in a statement, the correctness of which, as made in these general terms, every careful reader will allow. *It was intended for an introduction to the four following books.* But in what way an introduction, is a subject for more particular inquiry.

And we may hope, that that inquiry will guide us to important principles to be applied to the interpretation of the book. It has become a familiar doctrine of the science of criticism, that, in the exposition of any writing, the object of the writer is to be had in view. This principle has been more carefully applied by recent commentators upon scripture, than had been customary with their predecessors; and the results obtained by them have been proportionably valuable.

With the twelfth chapter of Genesis begins the history of Abraham; and from that point it is obvious, that the record relates to the fortunes of his race in one of the lines of descent, other subjects being introduced only as collateral and incidental to that. To say no more here of this latter portion, to which I shall presently recur, I believe the remark will not be disputed, that the general course of comment upon the previous part (containing in eleven chapters less than one fifth part of the substance of the whole book) has proceeded upon the assumption of that part having been intended for either, 1. a General History, or, 2. a Religious History, of our race in primitive times.

Can either of these be reasonably maintained to have been its purpose? Was it designed, in the first place, for a General History of primeval man? A survey, within so narrow a space, of a period of two thousand years (according to its own chronology) would of course need to be extremely concise; but it would not the less admit and require a completeness

of its own. What form a loose sketch of such a period, drawn up by an unskilful person, might take, we might hesitate to say; though even such a sketch could not be supposed, with any probability, to take the shape, which we shall find to belong to the narrative before us. At all events, there can be no hesitation in affirming, that a general history, prepared by a writer of such intelligence as Moses, though compressed within such close limits, would still introduce all the great topics, which belong to a composition of that character; and its brevity would only require it the more carefully to exclude repetitions and all extraneous matter.

But the passage under our notice, so far from exhibiting even such a concise view of the progress of human society, as its limits would admit, is occupied, in great part, with genealogical lists, and with personal narratives and anecdotes. While no small part of the brief space, through which the narrative extends, is taken up with repetitions of portions of the history related, nothing occurs, which can, with any propriety, be called a record of the establishment of governments, or of other forms of social organization; nothing in the way of a general account of the occupations, culture, and manner of life, of the mass of mankind. Except the periods occupied by the genealogies, the bulk of this narrative relates to two principal eras; namely, that of the creation, in connexion with which occur some accounts of incidents in the lives of the first parents of the race, and of their children; and that of a deluge of water, represented to have taken place about sixteen centuries afterwards, in connexion with which are, in like manner, introduced some personal anecdotes of the family, which survived that wreck, and a statement (which, though brief, cannot be called

condensed, so as to be proportioned in extent to the space which it would naturally occupy in so compendious a general history) of the occasion of the dispersion of man into different parts of the earth. I think no one can undertake to say, that he finds, in this passage, that character of method, sequence, and proportion of the parts, which would belong to a sketch of human history during the period which it embraces.

Can it be called, in the second place, a Religious History of the primitive ages of man? Undoubtedly it is supposable, that the writer might have thus limited the aims and topics of his narrative. But our question is; Do the phenomena of the record before us accord with that supposition? On the contrary, whatever interpretation may be put upon some of its parts, it exhibits both deficiencies and redundancies, when considered in relation to this view, such as forbid the view to be entertained. On the one hand, in what way, except as every thing which occurs may be said to have some bearing on religion, can such passages as the genealogies, and the notices of Lamech, Nimrod, and the dispersion at Babel, be maintained to have relation to that subject? And on the other hand, there is nothing, which can be called an account of the origin, still less of the modes, of idolatrous worship, with its consequent follies and depravities; the great question on which a writer of religious history would be careful to inform his readers. Scarcely any thing is told of early revelations respecting religious truth and duty; or of the manner in which the religious sentiment was directly expressed by devout men; or of the conduct, in the relations of life, to which it prompted them; or of the course of its struggles with progressive error and wickedness.

Let us endeavour to find a clue to the purpose of Moses in writing this book, in what we know of the position which he occupied, and the aims, which, from that cause, he was likely to entertain. If any probable conclusion, which we may reach in this course of inquiry, should subsequently be found to conform to the actual character of the contents of the book, we shall then have all the evidence, of which the nature of the case admits, in favor of its justness.

The office of Moses was specifically that of the founder of a new religious institution, to which, in his case, as we have seen in a previous part of our inquiries, was incident the office of founder of a new state and polity. Officially he was no historian. Of his distinctive and characteristic mission and work, historical writing made no part, any more than it made part of the office and ministry of Jesus, or of Paul. Let us be careful not to lose sight of the character, which we have found cause to ascribe to him.

1. As a religious teacher, he had in his Law enjoined upon the Jewish people the service of that one God, who, he reminded them, had made himself known in earlier times to the patriarchs of their race. It was in this character of "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," that, in order to enforce religious duty by the power of grateful patriotic associations, he constantly held up the Deity to their view. But who were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? What were their histories, what their conditions and characters? What communications had they received from the Deity, and what had been their own conduct consequent upon those communications? Any family traditions, which had come down to the age of Moses, furnishing the answer to these questions, it is not to be presumed were possessed uniform and com-

plete by every Jew, though every Jew was interested, and interested now more than ever, in possessing them. How fit and natural, then, to bring together, and present in one body of information, the substance of what report or record had preserved relating to the lives of those ancient worthies, especially to revelations, which had been made to them of religious truth, and of the divine purposes of mercy towards their posterity. How abrupt would have been an annunciation, in the Law, of Jehovah to the Jews as the God of their fathers, introduced by no account of those fathers, of the relation in which Jehovah had stood, and of the disclosures and promises which he had made, to them. And how especially fit should we be prepared beforehand to pronounce it, that these accounts should be reduced by Moses to a formal and permanent shape, with a view to the instruction of those generations of the race, which should come after.

2. Again; in order to the establishment of the Jewish state and religion, Moses was leading the people to the invasion of Canaan. How came that country to be theirs? What right had they to occupy it? What were the nature and foundation of a claim, which was to authorize them violently to dispossess the present inhabitants? And what were the reasons, why, being now in quest of a permanent settlement, they should desire to settle in that country, rather than in some other, which was either vacant, or which they might more conveniently conquer? These were questions, which could not fail to arise. It was necessary that they should receive some answer. Without some satisfactory answer to them, the aims of the people would remain unsettled; the question would remain open, to destroy all unanimity of purpose; the proper excitement, in short, could not be secured for a persevering

prosecution of a purpose, upon which it was important that all the energies of the people should be concentrated. Had the territory, which they were to invade, been anciently assigned to their race by an express divine decree; had it been actually the dwelling of their revered forefathers, only relinquished by them for a time, under the force of circumstances, but never intended by them to be abandoned; was it, though now possessed by recent interlopers, the rightful patrimony of their own line;—we might predict with confidence, that these considerations would be presented by Moses in a careful adduction of the historical facts which established them.

3. Once more; in his character of teacher and law-giver, it belonged to Moses to enforce certain truths, and enjoin certain observances. He uttered his instructions and his precepts, it is true, under the authority of that supernatural commission from God, with which acts of miraculous power proved him to be invested. But he taught a self-willed and intractable people; and, if their character had been different, still it was fit that he should resort to all promising means of conviction and conciliation, in favor of the truths and the practices, which he desired to commend to their minds. If, by referring to former times, he was able to show them, that truths, which he was anxious for them to approve and adopt, were no novelties,—that, on the contrary, they were the ancient doctrine, from which errors, now current among the idolatrous nations, were but a recent departure,—and that observances and contributions, which they might think burdensome, were practices of other times and places; or, if he could but attach them more to some profitable usage, from which they were not averse, by informing or reminding them, that it had been observed by

others, especially by their honored ancestors ; here were collateral means of impression of a legitimate and effectual kind. If such virtual arguments were to be found in old history, we might reasonably assure ourselves, that Moses would avail himself of them.

I believe that the three general considerations, which I have presented, when compared with the matter actually brought together in the book of Genesis, will be found to explain, to a great extent, the selection and arrangement of that matter, and furnish the principles for its satisfactory interpretation. And if, through our very imperfect acquaintance with the condition and opinions of the time when Moses lived, and the people to whom he was commissioned, there remain parts of his work, which, with the aid of these considerations, we are still unable to elucidate, yet every instance of their successful application increases the probability, that, but for our ignorance of the necessary facts, they would suffice us for the interpretation of the rest.

All three of these considerations, — the first two, particularly, — apply to the latter portion of the book, beginning with the twelfth chapter, and comprising, as has been remarked, more than four-fifths of its contents. In that portion we have sketches of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with accounts of the revelations, which they from time to time received, and the impressions thus made upon their minds. We read there, further, of the divine promises to Abraham of the territory of Canaan, to be his own home and that of his posterity ; of its actual occupation by him ; and of its appropriation by him to Isaac, and by Isaac to Jacob, the ancestor of the twelve tribes, to the exclusion of the other lines of their descendants. Once more, we read there, as I shall endeavour to show, occasional references to events, opinions, insti-

tutions, and practices, belonging to the times of those patriarchs ; references made by Moses, to the end of securing a more favorable reception to single doctrines and laws of his own system.

But what occasion was there for producing the contents of the first eleven chapters of this book ? What was there to impel Moses to carry his history further back than to the time of Abraham ?

I might give a partial answer to this question, by remarking, that the mind of man covets completeness, and is always disposed to find some kind of completeness, when it may be had without too great cost ; and that with writers, who collect historical materials, this tendency may be constantly observed in their proneness to retrace a train of events to its origin in a remote age. They perceive, that at any recent period which they may assume for their starting-point, relations already subsisted, which themselves demand explanation, and they are under an influence to go back for this explanation to an early antiquity.* Having

* I have seen *Love of Completeness* reckoned by some writer among the native principles of the human mind. As to narrative writing, says Lord Kames, ("Elements of Criticism," chap. 23d,) "When we consider the chain of causes and effects in the material world, independent of purpose, design, or thought, we find a number of incidents in succession, without beginning, middle, or end ; every thing that happens is both a cause and an effect, being the effect of what goes before, and the cause of what follows. One incident may affect us more, another less ; but all of them are links in the universal chain. The mind, in viewing these incidents, cannot rest or settle ultimately upon any one, but is carried along in the train without any close." At all events, facts in abundance might be quoted in proof of the tendency to which I refer. Diodorus Siculus, for his history of the Egyptians, finds his starting-point in the origin of earthly things, beginning his work with an account of ancient speculations upon that subject ; and our own annalist, Prince, prefaces his "Chronological History of New England," with a sketch of events anterior to the settlement of that country, beginning with the Creation, and passing down the lines of the Hebrew patriarchs, judges, and kings, the four great ancient monarchies, and the

arrived at the time of the call of Abraham, the origin of the Jewish peculiarity, Moses was naturally led himself to consider the question, and he had prompted the inquiry on the part of his readers, Who was this Abraham, thus called? — a question which was equivalent to others; In whose country did Abraham live? From whom was he descended? How was he related to other families of the inhabitants of the earth? To furnish such information as was accessible upon these points, by tracing his descent from a common ancestor of the whole existing race of man, was only to go back (according to the chronology of the authority which Moses uses) through a period of three hundred years, to a second origin of human things, dated from a universal deluge, which, according to the representation, only a single family survived, the progenitors of all men living in Moses' day. But, this done, the inquiries would equally arise; Who was Noah, the survivor of that wreck? and was there any thing to be told of the experiences of that earlier, ruined world, linked in his person to the world now existing? The same motive, which had caused the history to be traced back from Abraham to Noah, would avail equally to cause the thread to be followed, — as far as there were means of pursuing it, — to its starting-place in the beginning of human things. Nor does the fact, that we regard Moses as being, for one great purpose, a divinely commissioned man, afford any reason why we should consider him as being precluded from employing himself, if he saw reason, as a mere uninspired compiler of ancient historical materials.*

kings of England, to arrive at his more immediate subject. We may call this an extravagance, but it is the extravagant indulgence of a natural impulse.

* There is a great vagueness of thought upon this subject. Because

But these suggestions would have more pertinence to the present case, had Moses undertaken, which I have argued that he did not, to write a general history. It is on the third of the considerations presented above, that I chiefly rely for an explanation of this introductory portion of Genesis. I shall attempt, in my next Lecture, to make the application, and to show, from an examination of the passage, that much of what it contains is of a nature to enforce, by ancient authority, practices and doctrines of Moses' Law, especially the two fundamental doctrines of the undivided sovereignty, and the moral government, of Jehovah ; a purpose which I conceive would be equally served, whether or not Moses gave implicit credit to details of the statements which he has thus preserved.

I proceed to the question, What were Moses' sources of information in respect to the contents of the book of Genesis ? or, to state it in the form which first con-

a man is under supernatural guidance for the execution of a religious office, it does not follow, that he is under that guidance in respect to other parts of conduct, or that he must refrain from acting or writing in cases where he has no inspiration to direct him. Paul needed no inspiration, and had none, for the transaction of his common affairs, for inditing a letter of business to Philemon, for sending to Troas for his books and parchments ; nor, if he had had taste and time for such occupations, was there any thing to prevent his applying himself to the squaring of the circle, or to the composition of a history of Cilicia, or of a funeral oration or poem upon Gamaliel ; labors in which, had he undertaken them, he would have enjoyed no supernatural aid, and would have pretended to none, and would have suffered injustice at the hands of any critic who had undertaken to judge of his work under that prepossession. The divine messenger is supernaturally endowed for the furtherance of a religious object. His peculiar powers extend not to any thing independent of the purpose for which they are given ; nor, on the other hand, is there any reason for supposing, that he is not at liberty to do, say, or write, in the exercise of his natural faculties, any thing which may be lawfully done, said, or written by another man.

cerns us, Did he obtain them through a divine communication?

Any one, who should see reason to apply the last of the three considerations, which I have presented, to the interpretation of the book, will of course give a negative answer to this question, so far as concerns the passages, to which he regards that consideration as applicable; inasmuch as statements, obtained through a divine communication, have no fitness for the use suggested, of an argument collateral to, and independent of, divine communication.

1. But, passing by this (as I have no right to take the fact for granted), I suggest, first, that, if we assume Moses to have been divinely instructed in what he has recorded in Genesis, we do it altogether without authority from him. Communications received from the Deity, and recorded in the later books of the Pentateuch, he announces as such, saying repeatedly, "The Lord spake unto Moses," and "The Lord said unto me." But neither this language, nor any equivalent, anywhere occurs in Genesis.

2. The reasons of the case would not justify the supposition. The introduction of a pure religious system into an idolatrous world is proper matter for direct revelation, nor without such revelation could Moses, or any other man, have become possessed of it. Not so with historical materials. On the one hand, the need of them is not so urgent; and, on the other, it is in the common course of things for them to be collected and handed down, in a more or less pure and trustworthy state. Each age instructs its successor; nor is it to be doubted, that notices, such as they were, of earlier times existed in the time of Moses, as in every other period since there was any thing to record or report.

3. The actual existence of such notices, before Moses' time, is referred to, on the face of the record.*

4. Different parts of the composition are marked by varieties of style and language, effectually distinguishing them from one another, and indicating that they had separate sources.

5. The contents of such parts are sometimes of a nature to show, that they not only had not a common origin, but that they were not elaborated by Moses, when they had come into his hands, so as to make one consecutive and consistent narrative. I think we shall have occasion to own, that different portions, distinguished by the diversities of style referred to, sometimes repeat, and sometimes, which is of yet more consequence, contradict one another.

The two observations last made require to be enlarged upon, in order to prepare the way for some important inferences. The fact was long ago observed, — though, I think, not as yet put, by any means, to all the use which should be made of it, — that the book of Genesis is not one uniform composition, but, in part, at least, a compilation from two or more, distinguished from one another by obvious diversities of style.† We read, for instance, a connected passage, in which some agency of the Supreme Being is described, and we find him called in it throughout by one name, אֱלֹהִים, rendered by our translators, *God*. We read another, in which, with equal con-

* E. g. Numb. xxi. 14, 15, 26–30. Such a passage as Gen. iv. 23, 24, can scarcely be doubted to be an ancient fragment of this kind.

† The earliest critic, whom I have seen referred to, as having noticed this important fact, was Vitranga, in 1712. It had, however, attracted little attention before the publication, in 1753, of the work of Astruc, entitled, "*Conjectures sur les Mémoires Originaux dont il paraît que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le Livre de Genèse.*"

stancy, another name is applied to him, יהוה, translated in our version, *the Lord*. Passages, in which these discriminating names occur, are also found to be respectively marked by other peculiarities of expression. In the compilation, as we have it, such successive passages in some cases go over the same ground, the one repeating accounts which have been already given by the other in different language. And sometimes, unless I read them altogether erroneously, they present inconsistent statements in treating the same subject.

I ask particular attention to the two last-named classes of facts, inasmuch as, if their existence shall be substantiated by the exhibition of instances, I apprehend them to have the most material bearing upon that *dogmatical* character, which I have particularly ascribed to the early part of the book of Genesis, and to afford the means of removing much of the mystery, which has been thought to hang over that much-canvassed portion of Scripture. Suppose that, at the present day, we should find a writer using historical materials, which, — from evident peculiarities of style, or otherwise, — appeared, upon their face, to be derived from different sources; suppose we should find, that he sets down their coincident statements side by side, or one beneath the other, not suppressing either on account of its presenting a mere repetition, which adds nothing to the reader's knowledge; and suppose that we should observe, that he pursues the same course, even when, in respect to subordinate statements, they do not agree together; — could we give any reasonable account of his having adopted such a method?

I think we could, provided we were able to refer to other related facts, such as belong to the case be-

fore us. We should say, that there were certain great points, in the history of events or opinions, respecting which alone the writer in question was concerned ; that, accordingly, to produce witnesses, who should repeat testimony to these points, was to pursue a course, which was strictly to his purpose ; and that, if these witnesses, at the same time, dissented from one another in minor particulars, they were not, on that account, the less, but the more fit for his use, inasmuch as their discrepance in such particulars, while they accorded in the main statement, exhibited them as strictly independent witnesses ; showed their evidence to be mutually corroborative ; made manifest their testimony as being, not merely the twice-recited declaration of one, but the accumulated testimony of more.

Let me propose a simple case, for the trial of this question. Let me suppose, that my purpose was to establish the fact, that a colony of Englishmen made a settlement on the shore of Massachusetts Bay, towards the close of the year 1620. Would it not be fit for me to arrange together ancient historical authorities, which maintained that fact ? And, if those testimonies were found to differ in some subsidiary and incidental particulars, would that diversity render them less, or, in one important respect, would it render them more fit for the use for which I made the citation ? If one authority declared the colony to have landed in the month of November, the other in December ; if, according to the one, the vessel which conveyed them had one name, according to the other a different ; if the number of emigrants was in one estimate greater, in the other less ; or if there was a contradiction as to their having been employed a week, or only a day, in disembarking ; should I, therefore,

reject such authorities, or should I regard their joint evidence, in respect to the sole question which was material, as only the more unsuspecting and cogent, for the diversity respecting such inferior matters as might easily have come to be differently understood in the lapse of time? * There being obviously no such agreement, as collusion, or purposed arrangement of any kind, or so much as conveyance through a common channel, would have occasioned, it would be but the more apparent, that what agreement there was belonged to

* Fifty years have passed since the settlement of Cincinnati, the capital of the great State of Ohio, and already it appears to have become impossible to ascertain the date of that event. One calculation makes it to have been the 26th day of December, 1788; one express authority designates the 28th day of that month, and another some day in January, 1789. An historian, to whom it was material to fix the chronology, would do the best he might to accomplish that object. He would examine the conflicting authorities, and would endeavour to reconcile them; if unable to do this, he would seek to determine which, under all circumstances, was the most credible; and, in the last resort, he would set all the statements before his readers, not undertaking to decide among them, but showing, by their collected evidence, that the date sought must have been within certain limits. But a writer, who only had in view some more general purpose, — whose object was merely, for instance, to show, that some Anglo-American colonists settled the place, — would not be pledged to any such investigation. He would be likely merely to adduce the different authorities, — inconsistent as they were in respect to minor points, but agreeing as to all that concerned him, — and dismiss them without perhaps so much as a reference to their diversities. And the case of such a writer has sufficient resemblance to that of Moses, as I understand it, to serve as an illustration of what I believe to have been here his method. — An ancient historian, to whom I have before referred, has actually taken a course like this in respect to what was a problem in his day, deducing the general conclusion, that Egypt was probably the country first settled, from particular inconsistent statements. "If," says he, "in the time of Deucalion's flood, the greatest part only of all living creatures were destroyed, then it is very probable, that those in Egypt were of such as were so preserved. . . . Or if all that had life perished (as some affirm), and the earth produced animals anew, yet it is urged, that, notwithstanding this, the chief production of animated things is to be ascribed to this country." — Diod. Sic. Lib. I. cap. 1.

a common basis of truth. There can be no doubt, I conceive, that a writer of any time, ancient or modern, would properly avail himself of such authorities in the way I have described; though it is true, that a modern writer would do it with a *môre* artificial method, and a more express exposition of his purpose, than Moses has used, agreeably to the stricter rules of composition which are received at the present day.

If these views be approved, they will be found to admit of such an application to portions of what Moses has collected in the book of Genesis, as will forbid either his veracity, or the credit of his revelation, to be implicated in statements, the incredible or objectionable character of which has been appealed to in disparagement of both.

But in respect to these historical materials, existing before Moses' time, whether in a written or an oral form, and brought together by him in the book of Genesis, the further question occurs; Whence did he obtain them? And the proper reply to this inquiry, I think, is, that they came into his possession precisely as they might have done into that of any other individual, circumstanced like him in respect to time, country, and personal relations.

A man of Israelitish descent, he was born in Egypt, where his nation had been settled between three and four hundred years. The transactions, related in the last thirty-nine chapters of Genesis, extended over a period of somewhat more than two hundred years, previous to the migration into that country. These transactions belonged to what was, strictly speaking, national, or, — what in this instance was the same, — family history. There can be no doubt, that the documents or traditions, which recorded or reported them, were such as had descended in the Israelitish line, if

through any human channel. From the nature of the case, no other nation could have originally possessed, or could have had any interest in transmitting them. Through Jewish hands they had come into Moses' hands, as himself a Jew.

The question respecting the fragments of primitive history arranged in the first eleven chapters of the book, is not to be disposed of in this way. With respect to these, let the following considerations be weighed. The Jews would be likely to have documents and traditions of their own, coming down from a period more remote than that of Abraham, their founder, which materials, supposing them to exist, would correspond with those existing in Chaldea, inasmuch as Abraham was a Chaldee by birth. Living so long among the Egyptians, it is natural to suppose, that they would know something of the historical lore,—were that better or worse,—which the wise and learned men of Egypt possessed; that they would become in some degree acquainted with Egyptian traditions, records, and speculations, respecting the origin of human things, and respecting later events. Phenician learning of the same description would be within their reach, for the country of the Phenicians was near, and the extensive commercial operations of that people could not fail to send abroad a knowledge of their opinions and writings. Through these channels and others, they might become acquainted with the *philosophems* of more distant countries, as of Italy, Persia, Hindostan. And, I might add, that the personal position of Moses was such as to place within his reach information of this kind, not generally possessed by his countrymen. The tradition, which may be inferred from the words of Stephen, reports him to have been trained “in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,” which, it is to be pre-

sumed, comprised some instruction in the philosophy of other countries; and a great part of his mature life was passed in a district of Arabia, affording him opportunity to become acquainted with opinions current in that and the neighbouring regions.

Here, then, we have what, — the position of Moses and of his people being alone considered, — might be accounted probable sources of the documents or traditions preserved by him in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. It might be, that historical materials, obtained from these sources, or from some of them, were more or less known to the people; or it might be, that Moses had access to them through advantages peculiar to himself.

If we possessed any thing like an authentic and full account of the early learning and philosophy of the nations which I have specified, a comparison of it with the contents of the first part of Genesis would be a work of the highest interest. But only some fragments of the record we desire to examine have found their way down to our times. In a few instances, Greek literature has preserved for us, in a translation, portions of Chaldee, Egyptian, and Phenician writings. Narratives and speculations occur in the Greek and Roman authors, which serve as testimonies to us of the state of early opinion in the more ancient nations, so far as we see reason to acquiesce in the opinion, that, in those nations of greater antiquity, the classical civilization and literature had their source. And modern researches have made us acquainted with opinions, claiming to be of very early origin in yet other countries, and connecting themselves with the subject before us. In all these ways, statements are obtained, which have been collected by Christian writers for the purpose of corroborating the historical verity of the

early part of Genesis, though some of them, in any view of their origin, are, I conceive, very ill adapted to that purpose. It has been already seen, that I would employ them in the different use of accounting for the contents of that composition.

The ancient nations had, for instance, their theories relating to the origin of the world and of human things. We could not doubt, that such was the fact, independently of any positive evidence ; for no subject would be likely earlier to engage the curiosity of observing and speculative men. And that it was the fact, further appears from evidence now accessible. An Egyptian cosmogony, preserved by Diodorus Siculus, is as follows ; *

“In the origin of things, heaven and earth presented together one appearance, and had a common nature. When bodies had begun to separate, the world assumed that arrangement, which we now witness, and the air became capable of constant motion. The fiery part of it, through its natural tendency to rise on account of its lightness, was elevated to the higher regions ; for the same reason, the sun and the host of stars continued in a perpetual whirl ; while the muddy and turbid particles, by the force of gravity, sank and adhered together in a damp state. But these, also, being in constant agitation, the sea was formed by the fluid parts, and the earth of the more solid, the latter, however, remaining soft and miry. By degrees, through the heat of the sun, it acquired more firmness, and was brought into a state of fermentation. Germs, created by this heat, and still moist, received nutriment by night from the clouds, and by day acquired solidity from heat. And when they had

* Lib. I. cap. 1, ad. init.

come to maturity, and their integuments were scorched and burst, then appeared from them various forms of animated being. Some of these, having a large proportion of heat, mounted upwards, and became birds. Such as had an earthly grossness, formed the classes of reptiles, and other terrestrial animals. Such as retained a great degree of moisture, were assigned to a place suitable to them, and became fishes. The earth, hardened by degrees by the influence of the sun and wind, at length became incapable of production, and then animals perpetuated their own species. This," continues the Greek historian, "is not unlike what Euripides says, who was a disciple of Anaxagoras. For this is his language in the *Melanippe* ;

‘There was one aspect to sky and earth ;
Then the secret powers doing their office
Produced all things unto the regions of light,
Beasts, birds, trees, the sea-flock,
Finally, men themselves.’”

Sanchoniathon, the Phenician historian, is believed to have lived at or about the time of Joshua. He is said to have written a history, in nine books, which was translated into Greek by Philo Byblius, in the time of the Emperor Adrian. Only fragments of the work remain, preserved by Eusebius in his *Præparatio Evangelica*. The following is an extract.

“The Phenician theology assumes, as the origin of the material universe, a dark and condensed windy air, or a breeze of thick air, and a turbid and black chaos. These were unbounded, and for a long time without form. But, when this wind became enamoured of its own first principles, and an intimate union took place, that connexion was called *Pothos* ; and it was the beginning of the creation of all things. And it knew not its own production ; but from its embrace with the wind was generated *Môt* ; which some call

Thus, but others the putrefaction of a watery mixture. And from this sprang all the seed of the creation, and the generation of the universe.

“And there were certain animals without sensation, from which intelligent animals were produced, and these were called *Zophasemin*, that is, overseers of the heavens; and they were formed in the shape of an egg; and from Môt shone forth the sun and the moon, and the less and greater stars,” &c.*

Let it be observed, that both these cosmogonies are atheistical. Both refer the existing form of material things to powers inherent in matter. They are speculations of the Egyptians and Phenicians, two out of the three nations, with whose opinions the Hebrews of Moses' time were so situated as to be best acquainted, and most likely to have been infected. If, under these circumstances, Moses knew, that there was some other ancient account of the origin of things, which, referring the creation to a divine power, would show, that the religious errors of these were not uncontradicted, nothing could be more to his purpose than to produce it, even though it should itself contain errors in subordinate particulars, not impairing its religious use. And especially would it appear valuable to him in this way, if the doctrines it exhibited might be traced to Chaldea, the venerated mother-country of the Hebrew line. That he could refer to Chaldea for such doctrines, we are unable, in the absence of historical testimony concerning that country, positively to prove, though a few words of its historian, Berosus, are not without interest, where he says; “Belus, by whom they signify Jupiter, divided the darkness, and separated the heavens from the earth, and reduced

* Euseb. “*Præparatio Evangelica*,” lib. I. cap. 10. ad init.

the universe to order. Belus formed also the stars, and the sun, and the moon, and the five planets.”* But there is an ancient testimony, from a different source, so remarkably accordant with the opening passage of Genesis, not only in its general scope, but in the peculiar arrangement of a distribution of the work of creation into six days, that it deserves special attention ; and this the rather, as, the Etrurians (the people spoken of) not having had, as far as we know, any relations with the Jews, after the Jews became a separate people, there would be less probability than in other cases in the conjecture, that they borrowed from Moses, and not Moses from them, or from some source common to both.

“A skilful person among them,” says Suidas,† “wrote a history, in which he says ; ‘God, the maker of all things, employed twelve thousand years in their creation, and extended these years over twelve divisions, called *houses*. In the first thousand years, he created the heaven and the earth ; in the second, he made this apparent firmament, and called it heaven ; in the third, the sea, and all the waters in the earth ; in the fourth, the great lights, the sun and the moon, together with the stars ; in the fifth, every soul of birds, and reptiles, and quadrupeds, living in the air, and in the earth, and in the waters ; in the sixth, man. It appears, therefore, that the first six thousand years were consumed before the formation of man ; and during the other six thousand years the human race will continue, so that the full time of the consummation will be twelve thousand years.’” ‡

* Apud Euseb. “Chronic. Frag.” p. 6. Edit. Amstel.

† “Historica,” Art. *Tyrrhenia*.

‡ There is also an ancient Persian account of the Creation, which makes it to have occupied six periods of an unequal number of days,

I will add here one specimen of ancient authorities, relating to a second origin of earthly things after a destruction of the earlier inhabitants of the globe by a flood of water. A peculiar interest attaches to it, not only by reason of its striking resemblance to the corresponding narrative in Genesis, but because of its origin being traced to the country which was the birth-place of Moses' ancestry ; making the supposition a probable one, that an account incorporated by him into his book, as having been handed down to him from his ancestor Abraham, who learned it at his native home, remained among the traditions of that country, till, taking a place in profane literature, it has descended to us through another channel.* Berosus, a Babylonian priest, believed to have lived in the time of Alexander the Great, composed from ancient documents a history of Chaldea, no longer extant, but of which fragments are preserved in the writings of Josephus, Eusebius, Syncellus, and others. In these fragments are found the account of the creation from which I just now quoted, and accounts of the deluge and the dispersion at Babel, remarkably similar to those in Genesis.

Of Xisuthrus, who, like Noah, is represented as the last of a line of ten persons, Berosus says, that "in his time

from thirty up to eighty ; the heavens being made in the first time ; the waters in the second ; the earth in the third ; trees in the fourth ; inferior animals in the fifth ; and man in the sixth. See Hyde, "Vet. Pers. et Parth. et Med. Relig. Hist." pp. 162-167. Edit. 2da. — The Persian cosmogony, like the Etrurian, involves the doctrine of theism. So does that of Ovid (see *Metamorphoseon* Lib. 1. ad init.). But from what earlier sources the classical writers had their views, it is now impossible to ascertain.

* Also, Jacob, grandson of Abraham, was many years an inhabitant, and eleven of his sons were natives, of Mesopotamia, from which country they may have brought this and other traditions, to be transmitted from them to the age of Moses.

happened a great deluge. The Deity, Chronus, appeared to him in a vision, and warned him that, upon the fifteenth day of the month Dæsius, there would be a flood, by which mankind would be destroyed. He therefore enjoined him to build a vessel, and take with him into it his friends and relations; and to convey on board every thing necessary to sustain life, together with all the different animals, both birds and quadrupeds, and trust himself fearlessly to the deep. He obeyed the divine admonition, and built a vessel five stadia in length, and two in breadth. Into this he put every thing which he had prepared, and, last of all, conveyed into it his wife, his children, and his friends. After the flood had been upon the earth and was in time abated, Xisuthrus sent out birds from the vessel, which, not finding any food, nor any place whereupon they might rest their feet, returned to him again. After an interval of some days, he sent them forth a second time; and they now returned with their feet tinged with mud. He made a trial a third time with these birds; but they returned to him no more; from whence he judged that the surface of the earth had appeared above the waters. He therefore made an opening in the vessel, and upon looking out found that it was stranded upon the side of some mountain; upon which he immediately quitted it with his wife, his daughter, and the pilot. Xisuthrus then paid his adoration to the earth; and, having constructed an altar, offered sacrifices to the gods.* The account of the confusion of tongues, with its cause,

* This extract from Berosus is preserved by Syncellus ("Chron." p. 30, Edit. Paris.) and Eusebius ("Chronic. Frag." p. 8), who quote it at second hand from Alexander Polyhistor. They also refer (Syncel. "Chron." p. 38; Euseb. "Chronic. Frag." *ubi supra*,) to Abydenus, whose works, as well as those of Alexander Polyhistor, are now lost, for a similar statement of the record of Berosus.

as given by Abydenus from Berosus, has an equally close resemblance to the narrative preserved by Moses. "They say, that the first inhabitants of the earth, glorying in their own strength and size, and despising the gods, undertook to raise a tower, whose top should reach the sky, in the place in which Babylon now stands. But when it approached the heaven, the winds assisted the gods, and overthrew the work upon its contrivers, and its ruins are said to be still at Babylon; and the gods introduced a diversity of tongues among men, who, till that time, had all spoken the same language."*

It was, I conceive, materials of this class, which, coming into Moses' hands through more or fewer of the different channels which I have indicated, were adopted by him into the beginning of his book. Those which he selected for use told him of the descent of Abraham, the father of his race, represented to have lived about six hundred years before himself, from one of a family of eight persons, the sole survivors of a great flood of water, which had destroyed all the other men of an earlier world, and all its animals, except such as had shared with them the protection of the great ship, which, under divine direction, they had prepared for their own escape. The only other account of any length, which Moses has preserved of occurrences between his own time and that of this deluge, represented to be a period of a little more than a thousand years, is that of the dispersion of the

* Apud Euseb. "Præparatio Evang." Lib. 9. § 14. Syncel. "Chron." p. 44. The account is also cited by Eusebius (Lib. 9, § 17) from Eupolemus. It appears, again, in a passage of the "Sybilline Oracles," so called, of which I give Bryant's translation in his "Analysis of Ancient Mythology," (Vol. III. p. 78.) who remarks of it as follows; "It has been borrowed by some Hellenistic Jew, or Gnostic, and inserted amid a deal of trash of his own composing. The superior antiquity of that part, which I have laid

race into different families and countries, related to have taken place from Babel or Babylon.

In respect, then, to the deluge, and the events reported to have occurred between its date and the time of Abraham, — the latest of them six hundred years before Moses' own age, and the earliest, according to the record, about a thousand, — the question is presented, whether we have any reasonable ground for thinking, that Moses placed any different reliance on traditions which had reached him, from what we should place on traditions of events equally distant from our own times, and brought to us through similar channels of information. Is it not altogether likely, that he said, as doubtless we should see cause to say under similar circumstances ; "These are statements, which have come to me from a remote time, and how far they are true in their details, it is now too late to examine. That they are true throughout, is what cannot be admitted, for the reason, — if there were no other, — that in some of their circumstances, they

before the reader, is plain from its being mentioned by Josephus. Some lines are likewise quoted by Athenagoras, and Theophilus Antiochenus,"

"But when the judgments of the Almighty God
Were ripe for execution ; when the Tower
Rose to the skies upon Assyria's plain,
And all mankind one language only knew ;
A dread commission from on high was given
To the fell whirlwinds, which with dire alarms
Beat on the Tower, and to its lowest base
Shook it convulsed. And now all intercourse,
By some occult and overruling power,
Ceased among men ; by utterance they strove
Perplexed and anxious to disclose their mind ;
But their lip failed them, and in lieu of words
Produced a painful babbling sound ; the place
Was thence called Babel ; by the apostate crew
Named from the event. Then, severed far away,
They sped uncertain into realms unknown.
Thus kingdoms rose ; and the glad world was filled."

are mutually contradictory. As true throughout, therefore, I do not present them; any reader will see that I do not, who observes that I place them side by side, with their inconsistencies on their face. But tradition has always, or generally, a basis of truth; and, as to the great objects for which I care to adduce them, these otherwise conflicting authorities coincide. The documents are good evidence respecting the state of sentiment in that time, ancient to my contemporaries, when they were composed; and accordingly they will have a rightful efficacy to win this people to opinions and practices which on other grounds it is their duty to receive, by showing that they are no novelties, but, on the contrary, had the approbation of early and venerated ages."

In respect to yet more remote times, — to that race of men, and their fortunes, who were reported to have lived before this deluge, — one or the other of two things was true, though which was true might to Moses, as well as to us, be uncertain. The tradition of one family alone having survived a wreck of earlier things, was or was not an historical verity. If it were not historical verity, but an invention, then the account of occurrences related as having taken place before that time, being destitute of historical foundation, was only deserving of preservation and regard as comprehending the views of later times (but still times ancient to the contemporaries of Moses) in respect to the Deity and some other subjects; but, regarded in this view, it still retained a great value. If that statement was to be taken for historical truth, then the question remained for an historical inquirer, in what degree of purity the narrative of that earlier world had come down to Moses. Between Noah, the survivor of the deluge, and himself, it had been

exposed to the chances of a thousand years. And, thus unavoidably liable to corruption in transmission from Noah, how had it been transmitted down to Noah's time? In what manner had the old patriarch himself received that account of the earlier sixteen hundred years, which, on the supposition, he had handed down to posterity? In what language, through what channels, had the history of the creation, and of primitive man, come to his knowledge? How far would Moses, or any other judicious man of the same time, have felt it safe to rely on the fidelity and precision of antediluvian traditions, which, after running through an earlier period of many centuries, and passing through one messenger from the primeval world to the more modern, had thence struggled down to his own age? Even if they had a consistency and uniformity, which they have not, should we find it reasonable to say, that, reaching him in such a manner, he would yield a full assent to all that they reported, and demand for them a like assent from his nation and from readers of other ages?

It is plain, that questions of the kind which I have indicated belonged solely to the department of the historical inquirer, as well as that (in many of their particulars, at least) they had become unsusceptible of solution when Moses wrote. I conceive that we have no reason for imagining that he ever entertained them. As a religious teacher he designed to show, by the production of such evidence as he could command,—however that evidence might be mingled with other matters which concerned him not,—that the opinion of times long anterior to his own gave its support to truths and practices, which his Law asserted and enjoined;—especially to the great doctrines of *the Unity and the Moral Government of God.*

LECTURE XXII.

THE TIME BEFORE ABRAHAM.

GENESIS I. 1.—XI. 26.

INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN THE TWO ACCOUNTS OF THE CREATION IN GENESIS. — OBJECT OF MOSES IN PRESENTING THEM. — THEORY OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIRST ELEVEN CHAPTERS. — CHARACTER AND OBJECT OF THE PASSAGE RELATING TO WHAT IS CALLED THE FALL OF MAN. — COMPARISON OF THE GENEALOGIES FROM ADAM TO NOAH. — DOUBLE ACCOUNT OF THE DELUGE IN NOAH'S TIME. — SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF NOAH. — ACCOUNT OF HIS DESCENDANTS. — CONFUSION OF LANGUAGES AND DISPERSION OF MANKIND. — PARENTAGE OF ABRAHAM.

IN the first two chapters of Genesis, I think we have two distinct accounts of the Creation, derived by Moses from different sources, and inconsistent in their details with each other. In the passage embracing the first chapter, and extending a few periods into the second, we read, that the Creation was the work of six successive days ; light being made on what is called the first day, which, however, there was yet no sun to measure ; the fixing of a solid partition between waters beneath the sky, and above it, being accomplished on the second ; vegetation of various sorts being made to spring from the dry land on the third ; the heavenly luminaries, the sun, moon, and constellations being set in their spheres, for the earth's use, on the fourth ; fishes and fowl being brought into existence from water on the fifth ; and the work of the sixth consisting in the creation, from the earth, of quadrupeds, reptiles, and man, of both sexes. The

account concludes with God's investing man, his last consummate work, with dominion over the rest of his creatures, and with his *lying by* (to use an expression which is no stronger than the original) to recruit himself by repose after so arduous a toil.*

* "Let them be for signs and for seasons," &c. (i. 14); this passage may have had an interest for Moses, as favoring his institution of periodically recurring holydays. — "And God said, 'Let us make man,' " &c. (26); the plural being used as the customary royal style; see 2 Sam. xvi. 20; 1 Kings, xii. 9; 2 Chron. x. 9; Ez. iv. 18. — "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion," &c. (ibid.); a passage which was to Moses' purpose, as it was opposed to the idolatries which ascribed to animals dominion over man, and worshipped gods made in their form. Comp. Deut. iv. 16–18. — "I have given you every herb bearing seed; . . . to you it shall be for meat" (29); an implied hint to the Jews, that they should not be uneasy at being denied some kinds of animal food (comp. Lev. xi.), when, according to the old records on the subject, the fathers of the race had been prohibited from its use altogether. — According to the representation in i. 30, all animals (the tiger, e. g. included) were at first granivorous. — "And God blessed the seventh day," &c. (ii. 3). This text may be thought liable to a strong suspicion of having been originally a marginal gloss, by some one who desired to point out a coincidence between the narrative in the preceding verses, and the Mosaic institution of the Sabbath. If a supposititious passage, it is probable that such was its design. If not, I cannot allow, that it contains any reference to that institution. For remarks upon it, see Vol. I. p. 189. The fact, that all or most nations are found to divide time into periods of seven days, proves nothing as to an original divine institution of the kind. Astronomical observations have always been the basis of divisions of time; the number of planets visible from the earth, including the sun and moon, would naturally furnish the hint; and in fact, the names given by different nations to the heavenly bodies have been commonly transferred to the days of the week. (See Selden "De Jure Nat. et Gent. juxta Discip. Heb." cap. 20.) Or, perhaps, a still more probable account of the arrangement would be one which should refer it to the quarterings of the moon. Indeed, when men had gone no further in their observation of the lunar phenomena, than to determine in a rough way the length of the month, they would almost unavoidably, if they desired a subdivision of that period, adopt a fourfold division, since it would be dictated by the analogy of the year, which has its natural fourfold division at the solstices and equinoxes. Also, that a fourfold division of any period of time defined by natural limits would be likely to be resorted to, is obvious from the customary division of the night into four watches.

Throughout this passage the Supreme Being is uniformly called אֱלֹהִים [God], the word occurring more than thirty times. At the fourth verse of the second chapter, a formal summary marks the conclusion of

The fact, that Genesis contains no hint whatever of any sabbath having been observed by the patriarchs, will appear very material to any one who adopts the view, which has been proposed, that it was one of the objects of that book to collect whatever records existed of ancient practices, such as might confirm the requisitions of the Law. — “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created” (4); these words, I think, are to be regarded rather as the summary and close of the passage which had preceded, than as the introduction to that which follows (comp. x. 20, 31, 32). The order of words, “the heavens and the earth” is the same as in i. 1, while in the next account they are transposed. Still more, the word בָּרָא, used repeatedly for the act of creation in the first account, does not occur in the second, unless it be here; and the clause refers to a generation, not only of the earth but “of the heavens”; a reference which is correct as to the passage preceding the fourth verse, but not as to that which follows it.

Much stress is commonly laid upon the fact, that the order, in which the work of creation is represented in the first chapter to have proceeded, accords with geological observations, which show vegetation to have existed before animal life, the tenants of the air and of the sea before land animals, and the inferior land animals before man; as if the accordance in this particular between the statement and the fact could only arise from the supernatural illumination of the writer. To such an argument, I reply; 1. that, if the statement, in this passage, of a certain succession of events coincides with the conclusions of science, the corresponding statement, in the other account of the creation (ii. 7, 18–20), contradicts those conclusions, and that there is nothing extraordinary in our finding, among different views taken of a subject, that one, in a certain particular, had an agreement with truth, which another had not; 2. that the coincidence is accounted for by the consideration, that it is a natural impulse of the human mind to regard the less perfect work as having preceded the more perfect in the order of time, which is the spirit of the arrangement in the verses in question, and that it is also a common (I might say, the prevailing) course of Divine Providence, as far as we may observe it, to proceed in its operations, whether on a small or a large scale, from the less to the greater; 3. that my argument does not require any denial, that the view here presented, as far as the succession of creative acts is concerned, may have been obtained from some early revelation; such a revelation may have been made, and subsequently corrupted and overlaid, in its transmission from age to age, till it took the form in which it reached the hands of Moses.

this narrative, and another begins; the first part of which, extending to the end of that chapter, and distinguishing the Deity as uniformly by another name, that of יהוה אלהים [Jehovah God], contains what I regard as another account of the creation, differing in its course and circumstances from the first. I understand the second narrative to declare, without any mention of successive days, that, when the Lord God had made the earth and the heavens (whenever that might have been), the earth still remained without plant or herb, for want of rain and tillage. The Lord God made provision accordingly. For rain, he caused an evaporation to go up from the surface of the ground, to fall again and water it (a very different representation from that of a reservoir of "waters above the firmament"); and, for a cultivator, he made man. Then he planted a garden, of which he gave man the charge. Then he made the lower animals, and presented them before Adam, that he might give them names; after all which, pitying his solitude, he gave him a companion, taken from his own bosom, that he might feel more the nearness of the relation.*

It would occupy too much space to attempt to give even a brief statement of the various urgent objections, more or less obvious, against that common interpre-

* "In the day before it grew" (ii. 4, 5). The common translation here is self-contradictory. A literal rendering of the words, and that which I take to be the true one, is as follows; viz. "At the time when Jehovah God made [or had made] the earth and the heavens, *then* no plant of the field was as yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had grown."—The hasty mention of Euphrates, in ii. 14, as of a river too well known to need any description, may be regarded as some indication of a Chaldee origin of this passage.—The account in ii. 18, 21–24, fell in with the spirit of the Jewish law, in two particulars; 1. as the law was hostile to polygamy (See Vol. I. p. 275, note); and, 2. as it forbade (Ex. xxxiv. 12, 16) matrimonial alliances with certain foreign races; comp. Gen. xxix. 14.

tation of these passages, which regards them as constituting one harmonious narrative, and giving a true account of the phenomena of creation. And it is unnecessary. No one, on a careful perusal of the text, can fail to have the most important of them arise in his mind, and to be impressed with their great force. Besides the extreme difficulty, or, — as we may prefer to say, — the impossibility of devising any interpretation of the language, which would make it accord with universally acknowledged facts, I am persuaded, that, if these passages, — obviously distinguished as they are by naming the Deity differently, — could be presented to us in mature life for the first time, we should not hesitate to declare, that, with one great truth at the basis of both, they were narratives mutually contradictory in nearly all their incidents. While, according to the first, the creation of the world and its tenants was the work of six successive days, the second is not only silent respecting such a division of labors, but it distinctly implies a different method of proceeding. According to the first, the vegetable creation was brought into being before the animal; according to the second, it waited to be produced by tillage, which man was created to afford. According to the first, lower animals were made before man; according to the second, after. Fowls are distinctly declared, in the first, to have been produced from the water, in the second, as distinctly, from the ground; while, in the latter, the creation of fishes is not mentioned. The first represents the human sexes as being created at once; the second, as being created successively. In short, in nothing do they agree, except in the representation, that the creation was the work of one Supreme Almighty Being.

And I conceive, that their agreement in this doc-

trine of immense importance, was the ground of the value which Moses has attached to them ; and that the fitness which they had to enforce this doctrine, through the authority of an opinion far more ancient than his own times, furnished the reason of his incorporating them into his book. The Divine Unity was the fundamental truth of his religion ; and, in its support, I understand him virtually to present here the following argument. "The doctrine, which I have enforced upon you by the exhibition of miraculous works, is no new theology. It is the primitive belief, corrupted through the ages, which have preceded our own. Look for yourselves at the accounts, which antiquity has transmitted to us, of the beginning of things. They have been subjected, no doubt, through the chances of intervening time, to many corruptions. Unfounded speculations have been blended with them ; and they have come into such a state, that in minor points they contradict each other. But through all these superinduced and conflicting errors, the great truth, which I commend to you, of one unrivalled Creator and Sovereign, most luminously shines. One account declares, that his creation proceeded from him in one way ; another, that it proceeded from him in a different. It is clear, therefore, that they have come in separate channels, and have not been accommodated to each other, to serve any common object. And they unitedly testify to the true theology. It was the primitive sense of the race."

Our own manner of presenting the materials of such an argument would perhaps be, to dispose the passages side by side ; while in the book of Genesis, as we now have it, they are placed successively. But who would venture to say, that the very device, which we now approve, may not have been employed

in the autograph of Moses? And, at all events, who would regard such a difference in mere mechanical arrangement, as sufficient to invalidate the reasons of essential probability, which have been adduced from the contents of the writing?

The remarks which have been made on the first two chapters of Genesis have prepared the way for an exposition of the view which I take of the structure of that whole passage, introductory to the history of the Jewish patriarchs, which makes the subject of the present lecture. I give that view, both in its general features, in respect to which I feel confident of its correctness, and also with details, which strike my mind, on the whole, as probable, but which have no such connexion with the main argument, that this would be prejudiced, should they be rejected.

I conceive, that Moses has used two historical documents, or memoirs, which had descended from earlier times, and both of which comprised accounts of events represented to have occurred between the beginning of things and the age of Abraham. With reference to the Hebrew names respectively given in them to the Supreme, these authorities may be conveniently called the documents *Elohim* and *Jehovah*. To the former belong the following passages; viz. chapters i. 1 – ii. 4 (to the words “were created,” inclusive); v. 1–32; vi. 9–22; vii. 7–16 (to the words “had commanded him”); viii. 1–19; ix. 1–29; xi. 10–26. To the latter, belong the following; viz. chapters ii. 4 (from the words “in the day”)–iv. 26; vi. 1–8; vii. 1–6; 16 (from the words “and the Lord”)–24; viii. 20–22; x. 1–xi. 9.* That the passages in each of these series are

* It is, I conceive, by a very trifling and unsatisfactory criticism, that Eichhorn detaches short passages, single verses, and even parts of verses,

respectively but parts of one whole, appears from the fact, that each is strongly marked throughout with the same peculiarities of style. This being the case, it becomes highly probable, that both compositions, in the form in which Moses possessed them, are to be referred to authors either of the Jewish or of the Chaldee race, inasmuch as both terminate their accounts of events anterior to Abraham, with events of which the native country of Abraham and Nahor was the scene, and which would have no particular interest except for their compatriots.

Any reader who will examine in succession the passages which I have above indicated as belonging to the document *Elohim*, will find, that they connect per-

from the narrative in the midst of which they are found, and refers them to one source, while the whole context belongs to the other. What affords a reasonable ground of distinguishing a passage from others, as far as the names of the Deity are concerned, is its frequent and prevailing use of one or the other of those names. That the document *Jehovah* should occasionally call the Deity by the name *God*, is not a circumstance inconsistent with the uniformity and integrity of its structure, since all who knew the Deity by the former (which is a proper) name, knew him also by the latter (which is generic); and, supposing the other document to have been also written by a descendant of Abraham, the occasional occurrence of the word *Jehovah* by the side of *Elohim* is equally accounted for. Further, as to v. 29, which, on account of the last clause, Eichhorn would displace from its context, and refer to the other source, that clause has every appearance of being an interpolated gloss, containing an explanatory reference to iii. 17. The verses vi. 2, 4, contain the word *Elohim*, it is true, but not in an application which gives it any force in the present argument; and in vi. 5, which misleads the English reader, though the word *God* occurs in our version by some oversight, the original reads *Jehovah*. The passage, ix. 18 - 27, I have differed from Eichhorn in ascribing to the document *Elohim*, both because that designation of God occurs in it in two instances (26, 27), and because the termination (28, 29) is in the style of that authority; and the word *Jehovah* would very naturally come into the text as a gloss, explaining to the reader who was meant by the "God of Shem"; but I am not sure that Eichhorn's arrangement of the passage is not preferable, the rather as its whole tone and spirit indicate it to have been written by a Hebrew, or by some one equally hostile to the Canaanites.

fectly together ; a circumstance which makes it likely that, of that document (or, supposing it to have pursued the history further down than to Abraham's birth, then of that part of it which relates events before his time), Moses has preserved the whole. With the document *Jehovah* it would appear to have been different. An inspection of the passages, which I have specified above as belonging to it, will show, that they do not constitute absolutely a complete narrative, but that there are chasms in two places ; the name of Noah being introduced in the first instance abruptly,* without any recital of his origin, as is usual in other cases, and no account being given of his leaving the ark after the deluge.† This remark suggests the probability, that the document *Jehovah* was, in its complete state, a more full history, from which Moses only selected such portions as were in some way pertinent to his purpose, and for the most part such as treated the same topics as the other authority in his hands.

As to the first two chapters, I submitted the view, that Moses, being disposed, at the beginning of the Preface to his Book of the Law, to present traditions respecting the origin of earthly things, on account of their general interest, and, especially, of their bearing upon the fundamental point of theology,—viz. that the world neither existed from eternity, nor was the work of many gods,—possessed two leading authorities to that point, whose separate testimonies he set down together, in the condition in which they had reached him. But the second of these documents, after treating of the creation, from near the beginning to the close of what is now the second chapter of Genesis,

* vi. 8.

† Between vii. 24 and viii. 20.

proceeds in the third chapter to a different subject, commonly called the *Fall of Man*. What was his purpose, we are next to inquire, in retaining that narrative ?

The question is probably much more difficult to us, at this day, than it would be, if our minds had not long been trained to regarding the passage in a point of view, in which it has been connected by Christian commentators with a popular doctrine of theology ; viz. that of a universal depravity of the human race, inherited from Adam, their common ancestor, in consequence of an offence, which he is described as having committed.

Believing that that doctrine (nowhere referred to in any other part of the Old Testament) had no place in the system of Moses, and that a narrative relating to it would not be, on that account, at all pertinent to any of the objects of his office, I am led to look for a different solution ; in suggesting which, I ask to have it remembered, that we are in the region, I will not say of conjecture, but of probability, and not in that of demonstration. At this distance of time, very partially informed as we are of the state of opinion among those for whom Moses was writing, it may well be, that there were uses, arising out of that state of opinion, for such citations as this from ancient story, which uses we shall now find ourselves unable to discern. Yet that fact would by no means countervail the reasons of probability, which have been adduced to show, that Moses' object in presenting such was different from that of taking the facts stated in them on his own veracity.

When it is asked, why Moses, after giving the matter contained in the second chapter, the reason for which has been assigned, should have proceeded

to that presented in the third, it might be proper to retort the question, and inquire, why he should not so proceed, when the alternative would have been, stopping short abruptly in the midst of a closely connected narration. I submit, that the burden of proof is on the other side. The passage in which the Supreme Being is denominated *the Lord God*,* consists in the whole of only forty-six verses; and, as it has unity of subject and plan, and no passage introducing the same designation of the Deity occurs again, it probably had made originally one separate and complete whole. If, then, for such reasons as have been alleged, or others, it was fit, that Moses should adopt into ~~this~~ work that first portion of it which constitutes the second chapter of Genesis, would it not be a less natural way of proceeding, to break off in the midst, than to set down entire so brief a composition, supposing even that only about one half of it was material to his purpose? In adducing the words of another writer, nothing is more common than, along with that portion of them which is particularly pertinent to our use, to exhibit a considerable, perhaps an equal, amount of context. Several examples of this might be collected from the New Testament;† and, where no great addition of context would exhaust the composition, it is particularly natural to presume, that this would be the method pursued.

But I have supposed a case unnecessarily difficult. I remark, again, that the third chapter, as well as the second, is to Moses' purpose, in respect to its bear-

* For proof that it is the same document continued, I refer not only to the continued use of the same name for the Deity, but to a comparison of ii. 8, 15 with iii. 24; of ii. 9, 16, 17 with iii. 2, 3, 11, 17, 22; of ii. 25 with iii. 10, 11, &c.

† E. g. Matt. xii. 18, *et seq.*; Acts ii. 17, *et seq.*

ing on the great doctrine of his Law. Throughout that chapter, as well as the preceding, the Deity is repeatedly represented as One, having an unparticipated relation to man as his Guide and Judge; and, throughout the narrative part of it, he is also uniformly called *the Lord God*, or rather *Jehovah God*. The passage, then, in its whole extent, — perhaps recommended to Moses' use by its notoriously great antiquity, — proved this, at least; that the Supreme had been formerly known, in his undivided sovereignty, by that name by which Moses designed that his people should recognise him, the name *Jehovah*.

Yet more; it represented him, — and, of all that we have yet considered, it alone represented him, — in the light of men's *Moral Governor*. It showed, that antiquity had recognised him distinctly in this character; — a character, which the pagan systems of divinity almost entirely lost sight of, and in which it was most specifically to Moses' purpose to present the Deity to his people, since it was in this character that he claimed their obedience to the Law.

It is obvious to remark, further, that this passage may have been recommended to Moses' use by its bearing upon the fact of the seductiveness of women, and their power to lead astray from allegiance to God; that being a depraving influence, which the circumstances of society when he lived made very important, and which well-known provisions of his Law were designed to counteract.* In connexion with another class of regulations prescribed by him, — those relating to peculiarities of diet, — he may have valued the passage as testifying to the sense of antiquity, that the eating of forbidden food was not the light offence it

* Ex. xxxiv. 12, 16. Deut. vii. 3, 4. Comp. Numb. xxv. 1, 2.

might seem. In showing, that the serpent had been anciently regarded as the cruel enemy of man, he may have designed to indicate the recent origin of the idolatrous worship of that animal by the Egyptians and Phenicians.* And there may be thought to be some speciousness in the conjecture, — though, in the want of facts to sustain it, I may not venture to give it any prominence, — that Moses here had a reference to those mysteries of the Egyptian religion, which are believed to have been connected with great immoralities, and which at any rate, as far as the Israelites retained a partiality for them, would interfere with their attachment to the plainer food for their minds, provided in their Law. He may have designed to avail himself of this admonition, as well as of other lessons, from the passage; “Behold, antiquity testifies to us, that this prying curiosity into the knowledge of things good and evil, to the neglect of the spirit’s proper and appointed food, is but fruitful of all mischief, and provokes the heaviest divine displeasure.” — What the passage in question was in its origin, I cannot think that we have now the means of ascertaining. I do not perceive, that any more probable account is to be given of it, than that it was an imagination of some mind exercised by the problem of the origin of evil.†

* Says Eusebius (“*Præparatio Evangelica*,” lib. i. cap. 10, juxta fin.), “Taaustus deified the dragon and serpents, in which he was followed by the Phenicians and Egyptians; . . . accordingly this class of animals has its place in the temples and the mysteries.” The temple at Elephantina, in Upper Egypt, mentioned by Strabo (“*Geographia*,” p. 817, Edit. Amst. 1707,) was dedicated to the dragon, or winged serpent, under the name of *Cnuphis*. Eusebius, a little further on, quotes Zoroaster for the fact of the serpent being an object of adoration to the Persians; and to the point of serpent worship being a prominent form of the ancient Indian idolatry, see Maurice’s “*History of Hindostan*,” Vol. I. pp. 53, 54. (2d Edit.)

† There is no foundation in this passage for the popular idea, which

The fourth chapter gives to the Deity the name *Jehovah*, and connects itself with the third; while the fifth chapter, which in part goes over the same ground with the fourth, calls him *God*, and is thus referred

confounds the serpent with the Devil, the arch-adversary of man. It speaks throughout of a serpent, without the slightest intimation of its form being animated by a superhuman malignant spirit. — In the dialogue in iii. 1–5, the Supreme Being is called אֱלֹהִים, *God*. But this fact presents no inconsistency with that characteristic of the passage comprising these verses, which justifies its being reckoned as a document distinct from the first chapter. The title אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה is uniformly applied to the Deity in the narrative part, that is, where the narrator speaks for himself; and there was a fitness in putting a more generic name, rather than that of יְהוָה, into the mouths of those who were represented as speaking at a period nearly coeval with the creation of the world, and accordingly before the proper name of the Deity, יְהוָה, had been made known. — “The Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man is become as one of us,’” &c. (22). The representation seems to be of an address of Jehovah to his attendant spirits, agreeably to a natural conception of the writer drawn from the analogy of an earthly court. Comp. Job i. 6; ii. 1.

It is a very reasonable suggestion of Eichhorn, (“Einleitung in das A. T.” § 422,) that the author of what he calls “the document *Jehovah*,” or of the passages, to which we are presently to proceed, which give the name *Jehovah* to the Supreme, had in his hands the more ancient composition, to which we have been attending, viz. Gen. ii. 4–iii. 24, and took it for the introduction to his own work. The combination *Jehovah God*, or *the Lord God*, which runs through the second and third chapters, does not occur again in Genesis; but some other expressions, common to that passage with the succeeding passages in which the name *Jehovah*, or *the Lord*, is used, seem to be so many references, which the author of the latter narrative makes to the former. Comp. iv. 1 with iii. 20; iv. 2 with ii. 15; iv. 11 with iii. 14; iv. 14 with iii. 24; v. 29 with iii. 17 and 16, 18.

I have already made a suggestion, in a note on ii. 14, in reference to a probable Chaldee source of the passage to which that verse belongs. The etymologies of the word אֲשֶׁר and רָצָה in ii. 23, and iii. 20, belonging to the Shemitic class of languages, also indicate a Shemitic, and not an Egyptian, origin of the composition. And it is natural to regard the traditions which use the names *Jehovah* and *Jehovah God* as having descended in the family of Abraham, to whom the Deity was known under those names; though, in the uncertainty which exists as to the origin of the title יְהוָה, and the extent to which

to the same document which furnished the first account of the creation. At this point occur other striking distinctions in the structure of the two compositions, which will be found to be preserved in passages taken from them further on. The one (*Jehovah*) inclines to etymological elucidations of names,* and abounds in short anecdotes and sayings of those whom it commemorates;† while the other constantly observes a peculiar form in its genealogical lists, specifying, under the name of each individual of a line, the number of years that he lived before and after the birth of his first child.‡ The former details facts in the history of arts and inventions,§ respecting which the latter is silent.

In the fifth chapter we have no account of Cain and Abel, sons of Adam, whose history is given at length in the fourth; and it not only furnishes no intimation of his having had children before the birth of Seth, but distinctly implies the contrary.|| On the other hand, we are there told, that Seth's grandson was named *Cainan*; and both passages represent his son's name to have been Enos, though, according to the first, Lamech was not one of their posterity. The

it was used, in early times, as a designation of Divinity, it would not be safe to urge that argument. On the other hand, though, as we have seen, the mere designation of the Deity by the title אֱלֹהִים would not prove the composition, in which it occurred, to have proceeded from a source foreign to the Jews, still there is a strong probability, that the document *Elohim* is of Chaldee origin rather than Jewish, as a descendant of Abraham would hardly have so constantly avoided calling God by his proper name יהוה.

* Comp. iv. 1; 16 (where the word *Nod* is from the same root with that translated *vagabond* in 14); 25; xi. 9.

† Comp. iv. 23, 24; x. 9.

‡ Comp. v. 3-32; xi. 10-26.

§ Comp. iv. 17-24; x. 8, 9; xi. 1-9.

|| Comp. v. 3, 4.

two genealogies from Adam to Lamech are made up of substantially the same names, differently arranged. A comparison of the names, following the order in which they are disposed in the fourth chapter, will show the relation which they bear to one another. And that comparison is most fairly made without the vowel punctuation, the comparatively recent invention of that instrument making it unsuitable to be here taken into the account.

(Gen. iv.)

(Gen. v.)

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. קין, Cain, son of Adam. | 3. קינן, Cainan, son of |
| 2. חנוך, Enoch. | 6. חנוך, Enoch. [Enos. |
| 3. עירד, Irad. | 5. ירד, Jared. |
| 4. מחויאל, Mehujael. | 4. מהללאל, Mahalaleel. |
| 5. מתושאל, Methusael. | 7. מתושלח, Methuselah. |
| 6. למך, Lamech. | 8. למך, Lamech. |
| 7. שת, Seth, son of Adam. | 1. שת, Seth, son of Adam. |
| 8. אנוש, Enos. | 2. אנוש, Enos. |

It will be observed, that four names out of the eight are the same in the two catalogues, while the rest bear respectively a strong resemblance to one another. Under all the circumstances of the case, I cannot resist the persuasion, that the names of the same persons, understood to have lived before the flood of Noah, furnished the basis of both lists, and that the diversities of statement, which now appear, crept into the tradition before it assumed the separate forms in which it reached the hand of Moses, and has by him been transmitted to us. Whoever sees reason to entertain this opinion will, to the same extent, esteem it probable, that the Cain spoken of in the fourth chapter as the son of Adam, was the same person, who was understood by the author of the fifth chapter to be Adam's descendant in the third generation in the

line of Seth; and further, that the incidents related in full by the one writer as belonging to the history of Cain, were not known to the other.*

What we are concerned to investigate is, the object of Moses in preserving these records.

The passage which furnished the fourth chapter was to his purpose, on account of its recognition of the two cardinal doctrines of his Law; viz. the unity of God, and his moral government. In respect to the latter, its representation of the severe punishment denounced against Cain showed the sense entertained by antiquity of God's cognizance and abhorrence of such crimes. In respect to the former, it not only spoke of God as one, and that, too, under the name by which he had been revealed to the Jewish people, but further declared, that he was known to man by that name from a very early period.† Thus confirming the true theology, it also had an important bearing on the false systems which prevailed, containing, as it did, the testimony of ancient times to the opinion, that the real authors of various important arts and inventions which are specified, so far from deserving to be deified, as the putative authors had been by the insane superstitions of the times, were but men like others, and they the offspring of a murderous

* The genealogy from Adam to Noah, inclusive, contains ten names; and it is a very curious fact, and obviously important in reference to the probability of a Chaldee origin of these documents, that the Chaldee traditions also, as reported by Berosus, represent a line of ten kings to have terminated in Xisuthrus, to whose time they assign the deluge.

† iv. 26. The clause would be literally rendered as follows; "Then was it begun," (the form of the verb is a common one of the Hebrew impersonal,) — that is, "*Then did men begin* to call God by the name *Jehorah*," or to call Jehovah by his name. Perhaps it may even be better regarded as a concluding remark by Moses upon the whole passage; "Even so early as this had men begun to apply the sacred name by which the Deity is now known to us Jews."

progenitor.* In some minor particulars, this narrative gave confirmation to provisions of the Law. The Law enjoined a worship consisting in sacrifices, and, more particularly, in sacrifices of "firstlings of the flock, and of the fat thereof"; this passage represented such worship to have been the first that was ever offered and favorably received.† The Law asserted, as one of its most important principles, the sanctity of human life; this passage related how its first violation had been visited by the divine displeasure.‡ The spirit of the Law was hostile to the practice of polygamy; this passage testified to unhappy consequences, experienced by him who was said to have introduced the practice.§

In respect to that composition to which the fifth chapter belongs, I have already remarked, that Moses appears to have incorporated it into his work in its complete state. If he observed, that it was brief, and that, at the same time, a great portion of its contents was useful for his purpose, we should presume, that he would prefer to give it entire, rather than to derange and injure it by the omission of some (to him) immaterial parts; and, if this remark be well founded, then it follows, that we are not to be surprised, if we find, that parts are actually retained, which, as far as we can see, do not bear upon the objects that we

* iv. 20, 21, 22; comp. 2. The passage from Sanchoniatho, preserved by Eusebius, which has been already referred to, gives the Phenician account of the authors of several important inventions and discoveries.

† Comp. iv. 4 with Ex. xxix. 13; Numb. xviii. 17.

‡ Comp. iv. 9, *et seq.*, with Numb. xxxv. 31.

§ See Vol. I. p. 275, note *; and comp. iv. 23, 24. — iv. 15, perhaps, connected itself, in Moses' mind, with the institution of the blood-avenger (Comp. Numb. xxxv. 9–29). It would be doing him great injustice to understand him as relating, for historical fact, Cain's fear of being way-laid and slain, at a time when the earth had no inhabitants except his father's family, whom he was leaving.

understand him to have contemplated. And, particularly, when it was a narrative composition, that was to be used, a chasm, extremely inconvenient to the reader, would be created by the omission of the connecting parts, even if it was only the connected, and not the connecting passages, which had a bearing upon the author's main design. In the present instance, if any purpose of Moses required him to lay before his countrymen a view which antiquity had taken of a first and second origin of the human race, we can scarcely ask the question, why he did not omit all mention of the manner in which it had connected the two periods. Further; after setting down the fourth chapter, the contents of which we have seen to be, in various particulars, material to his plan, it may be, that he considered it due to historical truth, to show, by annexing to it the following passage, that details contained in the former were not contradicted by other ancient authority. The fifth chapter, also, like the preceding, represents the Creator as One, and as concerning himself with human affairs, and regarding virtue with approbation.*

* Gen. v. 1, 2, 24. — In v. 1, 3, there is an *anthropomorphic* representation of God, which it seems impossible to imagine originated with Moses. The resemblance of Adam to God is expressed in the same language, as the resemblance of Seth to Adam. It might be to Moses' purpose to preserve a statement which showed, that antiquity did not, like the recent idolatries, ascribe to the Deity a likeness to beasts, even if that statement contained error of a different kind; but he cannot be supposed to have presented it as his own view; comp. Ex. xx. 4, 5; Deut. iv. 12-18. — In v. 29, the explanation of Noah's name, in a reference to iii. 17, breaks the unity of the passage, which is elsewhere perfectly preserved, and has, as was before remarked (p. 38, note), every appearance of an interpolation. Even the method of making out the etymology is extremely violent, involving a confusion of the verbs *נָתַן* and *רָחַץ*. — The reader has long ago perceived, that it makes no part of my plan to defend the statements made in the fifth chapter respecting the great longevity of men in the antediluvian period, persuaded as I am, that

In the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters we read of a deluge of water, which, in retribution for the sins of men, is said to have destroyed the whole race of men and of other land animals, with the exception of one family, and of those animals to which they extended the protection of a great ship built for the purpose, agreeably to a divine command.

If the principles of interpretation, which I have expounded at large, are correct, they dispense the Biblical critic from the necessity, in order to maintain the authority of Moses, of proving, that such an inundation, within the period since the creation of man, has in truth, or may have, taken place; inasmuch as while they show the fact, that Moses could not have intended to vouch, and, of course, is not to be held responsible, for the historical correctness of the materials, which he has brought together in his first book, they also explain how, without becoming answerable for their historical

those statements do not rest on the authority of Moses. Exaggerations of this kind in relation to the length of human life, as well as to the kindred subject of gigantic dimensions of the human form, are found in the fabulous history of most ancient nations. Josephus, with a view to corroborate the representation in the passage before us, has appealed to numerous old Pagan testimonies to this point (*"Antiq. Jud."* lib. i. cap. 3, § 9). Maurice says (*"History of Hindostan,"* Vol. I. p. 349), "The race of men, according to the Brahmins, have been declining ever since the blessed Satya age; for, in that age, the life of man was prolonged to 100,000 years, and his stature was of the amazing height of twenty-one cubits." — In the statement of the ages of the antediluvian patriarchs, the Hebrew, Septuagint, and Samaritan copies agree. But there is a remarkable difference, consistently preserved by each throughout, in respect to the manner in which the lives are divided. The Septuagint adds a hundred years to the age at which the Hebrew represents each patriarch to have had his first son, when that age falls below a hundred and fifty years, and makes an equal deduction from the later period of his life. The Samaritan text proceeds, with equal uniformity, upon the opposite method, of admitting no representation of a person's having first become a parent after the age of one hundred and fifty years; and, as often as the Hebrew makes such a statement, it deducts a hundred years, and makes a corresponding addition to the later period.

exactness, he was justified in adducing them for another purpose.

Whether, in fact, the main event related actually took place ; whether, about five thousand years ago, more or less, there was an inundation, which swept the whole surface of the globe, or a large portion of it, including all the then inhabited part, is a question, to which, in the present state of geological science, it is impossible to provide one's self with a reply. If such an event did occur, then the fact of Moses' being acquainted with it, proves nothing in respect to any divine illumination possessed by him upon the subject, provided there were any survivors of the catastrophe to transmit the knowledge of it to his times. If it did not occur, still we have seen, that there might be good reasons (and to the suggestion of some such I shall presently proceed) why he should insert accounts of it in his narrative. References to other ancient opinions being imbedded in those accounts, they might be serviceable for his purpose, independently of the degree of historical credibility, which he ascribed to them.*

* The opinion of Cuvier on this subject has naturally had great authority. "If there is any circumstance," he says, "thoroughly established in geology, it is, that the crust of our globe has been subjected to a great and sudden revolution, the epoch of which cannot be dated much further back than five or six thousand years ago ; that this revolution had buried all the countries which were before inhabited by men and by the other animals that are now best known," &c. ("Essay on the Theory of the Earth," p. 171. Ed. Edin. 1817.) Dr. Buckland, in his "*Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*," published in 1823, expressed with equal confidence the same opinion, which, however, he afterwards retracted in his "*Bridgewater Treatise*" (see p. 80, note † Ed. Philad.). On the other hand, says Dr. McCulloch ; "Of the Mosaic deluge I have no hesitation in saying, that it has never been proved to have produced a single existing appearance of any kind, and that it ought to be struck out of the list of geological causes" ("*System of Geology*," &c., Vol. I. p. 445). Some writers, jealous for the honor of what they call the Mosaic account, not only allow, that there remain no physical results of the inundation therein described, but go further, and insist, that to look for any

Two accounts of a Deluge, as of the Creation, are in fact preserved by him, distinguished from each other by the different names given to the Deity, as well as by other peculiarities of language.* These accounts being long, and the topics comprehended under them various, the convenience of the reader in making a comparison dictated that they should be placed before his eye in successive parts, instead of being given each as a whole, like the accounts of the creation; and, accordingly, we find them inserted into each other, being divided for this purpose into portions of convenient length. We have double relations, 1. of man's wickedness, and of God's determination to punish it by a general destruction of the race, in which, however, Noah should be spared;† 2. of the directions

is to misunderstand that account, or to offer it indignity. In the third volume of the "Boston Journal of Philosophy and the Arts," is reprinted a paper by Dr. Fleming, a Scottish geologist, entitled "The Geological Deluge, as interpreted by Baron Cuvier and Professor Buckland, inconsistent with the Testimony of Moses and the Phenomena of Nature." In it (p. 479) is used the following language; "I feel my respect for the authority of revelation heightened, when I see on the present surface no memorials of the event. . . . If the geological creeds of Baron Cuvier and Professor Buckland be established as true in science, then must the book of Genesis be blotted out of the records of inspiration." It is certainly a fact not without interest in this connexion, that no human remains have been found, which can be referred to an antediluvian period. But, on the other hand, there has been little opportunity to examine those regions, which are believed to have been the first habitation of man.

* The following may serve for a specimen of distinctive characteristics of language, additional to that of the names respectively used for the Deity. To the enumeration of living beings under the heads of "man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air," the document *Elohim* adds, "after their kind," (vi. 20, vii. 14; comp. i. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25), a phrase which the document *Jehovah* does not employ; while the expressions כָּל הַיָּקִים, "every living substance," and שָׁחַד, "destroy," are peculiar to the latter (vi. 7; vii. 4, 23). This subject is fully treated by Eichhorn ("Einleitung in das A. T." § 419); but some of his examples will not bear examination.

† vi. 1-8 (*Jehovah*); 9-13 (*Elohim*).

to Noah respecting the preparation and occupation of *the ark*; * 3. of his occupying it with his family, and the animals under his care, and of the coming on of the deluge.† In an important particular, the authorities expressly and repeatedly contradict each other. According to one, Noah was directed to take with him into the ark two of all kinds of animals, without distinction of clean and unclean; according to the other, he was to observe this distinction, taking an unequal number of the different classes.‡

From what sources these accounts were derived, we have not sufficient means to determine. But the primitive traditions of several ancient nations refer to inundations, which swept over the whole, or a great portion, of the globe, destroying animal life as far as they extended. An ancient Hindoo poem con-

* Gen. vi. 14-22 (*Elohim*); vii. 1-6 (*Jehovah*).

† 7-16 (*Elohim*); 16-24 (*Jehovah*). — In viii. 1-19 (*Elohim*) succeeds an account of the cessation of the flood, and of the departure, from the ark, of all whom it had preserved. To this passage the document *Jehovah* furnishes no parallel. On the other hand, it has a peculiarity of its own, in relating the offering of a sacrifice by Noah (viii. 20), and connecting with it a promise to him, that a similar destruction shall never be repeated; which promise is recited at greater length in the following chapter (ix. 8-17), in a passage derived from the other source.

‡ vi. 19, 20, vii. 8, 9, 15 (*Elohim*); vii. 2, 3 (*Jehovah*). — I have represented the passage vi. 1-8, as belonging to the authority *Jehovah*, though in two instances the word *Elohim* occurs in it. I say in two instances, for the word *God*, which the English reader finds in the fifth verse, obtained its place there merely by some accident, and should be *the Lord*, יהוה being the corresponding word in the Hebrew. The two instances are in verses 2 and 4, where we find the phrase “sons of God.” But it has always been a question with the commentators, whether the writer meant here to refer to the Deity in any sense, — whether he did not mean to employ the word אֱלֹהִים in the primitive and more generic sense of *ruler*; and the Samaritan, Chaldee, and Arabic translators have actually rendered the phrase “sons of the rulers.” At all events, the occurrence of single instances of the generic name of the Deity, in passages where the proper name prevails, has already been sufficiently explained.

tains a narrative, corresponding in the general outline, and in several particulars, with those before us. It relates, that, mankind having become corrupt, Heri appeared to Satyavrata, a pious prince, and informed him, that the races of living creatures should be drowned by a deluge, while he, with seven other good men, and pairs of all brute animals, should be preserved in a great vessel miraculously formed; all which took place according as it had been foretold.* Those of the ancient Persians, who professed to hold their religion in its highest purity, maintained the doctrine of an ancient universal deluge, which, they pretended to have Zoroaster's authority for saying, was sent as a punishment for men's guilt; though others affirmed, that its devastation had been limited to a space of country.† The classical accounts of Deucalion's flood, resembling the narratives in Genesis in various particulars, such as the calamity having been provoked by the impiety of men, and the preservation of pairs of animals along with the family of Deucalion in a ship, are familiar to readers of Ovid and Lucian.‡ But especially the Chaldee account, to which reference was made in the last lecture,§ has so striking a similarity to those preserved by Moses, as to create no feeble presumption, — especially when viewed in connexion with the fact of his relation to the Chaldee race, and with the arguments which have been drawn above from indications of the language in the docu-

* See "Asiatic Researches," Vol. I., for a translation, by Sir William Jones, of part of an ancient poem called *The Bhagavat*. The passage referred to occurs on pp. 230–234.

† See Hyde, "De Relig. Vet. Pers." p. 169.

‡ Lucian, "De Deâ Syriâ," (Luciani Op. Bipont. Edit. Vol. IX. pp. 93–95.) Ovid, "Metamorphoseôn," Lib. I. Fab. 8. The English reader will do well to compare the passage of Ovid in Dryden's translation.

§ See pp. 25, 26.

ments used by him,* — that both were derived from original Chaldee sources.

The important question for us relates to the motives which influenced him thus to preserve them. On this point I submit the following considerations.

The contents of these narratives connected themselves with the genealogy of Abraham, since they described the chief thing known or believed by earlier times respecting that Noah, to whom tradition pretended to trace back the line of Abraham with a record of the intervening names.

Both represented the Deity as One, and one exhibited him under his distinctive name of *Jehovah*.

Both represented the animal races as having been destroyed by God for man's wickedness. Accordingly, they showed, that, in the judgment of earlier and better times, those animals were inferior both to God and man, and might not be deified, as they had been by the foolish contrivers of the surrounding false religions.

Both represented the Deity as exercising the function of a *Moral Governor*. And here, I think it probable, we are to find the chief reason of the value attached to them by Moses. Traditions, which had come down to his time, of a great deluge, represented God as administering retributive justice, even at the cost of the lives of all men. The accounts of the manner in which this had been done, might or might not have a good foundation of historical truth. But, unquestionably, they proved the view which antiquity had entertained respecting his taking a concern, and that too in the way of a moral discrimination, in the

* See p. 44; note. The remarkable identity of the two accounts, in respect to the name of the survivor of the deluge, and other material particulars, strongly favors the idea, that both originated in the same country, whatever that was.

affairs of men. And if it had been the faith of the purer preceding ages, that he would vindicate insulted truth and righteousness at the cost of the lives of the whole race, *a fortiori* was it to be believed by the Jews, that a single guilty nation could not with impunity provoke his displeasure.

In some particulars they furnished corroboration, from ancient opinions, to provisions of the Law. God had proposed, by the mediation of Moses, to *establish a covenant* with the Jews. This was no new conception of his relations to man; antiquity had recognised him as having established one with Noah.* Their worship was to consist in the offering of victims, and one of its forms was to be that of holocausts. In these, too, antiquity had recognised an acceptable form of adoration.† They were commanded to observe a distinction between clean and unclean animals. If an onerous observance, this was no novel one; the same distinction had been well known to the earlier ages.‡

The passage which forms the ninth chapter of Genesis, relates to the remainder of the life of Noah, after his preservation in the flood. Without supposing Moses to have placed a confidence in the accuracy of its details, such as there was nothing, probably, in the manner of its coming into his possession to justify, we may presume, that it appeared to him worthy of a place in his compend for the following reasons, among others.

* Compare Ex. xix. 5, 6, with Gen. vi. 18.

† viii. 20, 21.

‡ vii. 2, 8; viii. 20.—I might add here, that, in the recital in vi. 2-4, it is probable, that an intimation was intended to be conveyed of the danger of ill-assorted marriages, such as the Jews were forbidden to contract with the inhabitants of Canaan; and the texts, vi. 19, 20, and vii. 2, 9, 15, 16, which represent inferior animals as having had each only one mate, may have been designed as virtual censures of the practice of polygamy.

It was the brief termination of an account, which, for reasons already considered, he thought fit to preserve, and which, without it, would have closed abruptly.

It resembled what had gone before in speaking of God as One, thus testifying further to ancient opinion on that important head.

It represented man as being superior to other animals, instead of being bound to render them homage, as the Egyptians did.*

It contradicted the Egyptian fables, which referred husbandry and the vine to the bounty of Osiris.†

It showed, that the idea of God's making a covenant with man (as he had just been doing with the Jews), and that, too, ratified by a token (as with the Jews it had been by the token of circumcision), was an idea of no recent origin, but received in a remote antiquity.‡

It asserted, that some provisions of the Mosaic Law were among the primitive institutions of renewed human society, and thus gave further authority to that code.§

It furnished instructive enforcements of the important duties of temperance and filial piety.||

It tended to excite, on the part of the Jews, against the Canaanites, whom they were about to invade, that hostile feeling, which it concerned the national interest and policy that they should entertain.¶

* Gen. ix. 2, 3.

† ix. 20; comp. Diodorus Siculus, ("Bibliotheca," lib. i. § 15,) who says, *ἐβριότητι δὲ ἐν Ὁσίρι γίνεσθαι φασὶ τοῦ ἀμπέλου, πρῶτον τι αἶμα χρῆσθαι, καὶ διδάξαι τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους ἐν φουτίᾳ τοῦ ἀμπέλου.*

‡ ix. 9, 11, 13-17.

§ ix. 4, comp. Lev. vii. 26, 27, xvii. 11-14; ix. 5, 6, comp. Ex. xxi. 12, 29.

|| ix. 21-27.

¶ ix. 22-27. — It is remarkable, that when, under the circumstances, we should expect to read an execration pronounced upon Ham, we find

The first nine verses of the eleventh chapter distinctly refer themselves to that source, which I have entitled the document *Jehovah*, by that name of the Deity, which they repeatedly exhibit.* And there seems no doubt, that we should arrange the tenth chapter with them, as part of the same, both because of the close connexion between the two passages, and because the tenth chapter, besides presenting the name *Jehovah* in one verse, recites a genealogy in a manner similar to a previous passage distinguished by that name, especially in the particular of interspersing personal anecdotes.† The correctness of the genealogical table contained in this chapter, there is no internal evidence to discredit. But, independently of any unnecessary and unfounded supposition, that Moses designed to make himself responsible for its perfect accuracy, it had a sufficient claim to be preserved in his work, as containing what may have been the best account known by him to have come down from antiquity, of the affinities of the tribes of men to one another,‡

his son Canaan (25) to be made the object. To suppose, that we have here an Egyptian document, and that the Egyptians, being descended from Ham, through the line of Mizraim, and not that of Canaan (x. 6), wished thus to suppress the record of their ancestor's dishonor, would be no explanation of the fact; for, as long as the context was left as it is, no such object was accomplished. Yet none of the ancient versions present a various reading here, except the Arabic, which is of small authority compared with others; and its reading, "Cursed be the father of Canaan," is recommended by no internal probability. One can scarcely entertain a doubt, that the narrative owes its present form to hostile feelings towards the Canaanitish race, entertained either by its author, or by those through whom it was transmitted from him to Moses. A Hindoo account, strikingly similar to this, in all its main circumstances, may be seen in the "Asiatic Researches," Vol. III. pp. 312, 313. Instead of Noah, it gives the name *Satyavrata*; but his three sons are called, Sharma, Charma, and Jyapeti.

* xi. 5, 6, 8, 9.

† Comp. x. 5, 8 - 12, 25, 30, with iv. 17 - 26.

‡ An infinity of learning and labor has been expended upon the at-

and especially of the rise of the great empires of early times, the Egyptian,* the Babylonian,† and the Phœnician.‡

The continuation of the same narrative, in the first nine verses of the eleventh chapter, relates the building of the tower at Babel, and the consequent confusion of languages, and dispersion of men. I have already referred to the important fact, that the same history, in all material particulars, is traced, through profane authorities, to a Chaldee source.§ It would have an interest for Moses, entitling it to be preserved by him, as furnishing an early account, perhaps the earliest within his knowledge, of the original settlement of that country, from which his ancestor Abraham had subsequently come; and, perhaps, just released as he was from Egypt, where his countrymen are said by their historian to have been oppressed by hard labor upon the pyramids,|| he may have found a special worth in a history, which represented the Almighty as long ago displeased with such ambitious erections. At all events, the narrative, whatever might be its basis of historical truth, was pertinent to his

tempt to identify, through etymological resemblances, the ancestors of the different nations of men with the descendants of Noah named in this chapter. Javan, for instance, has been understood to be the father of the Ionians, Madai of the Medes, Meshech of the Muscovites, and Gomer of the Cimmerians, as well as Ashur of the Assyrians, and Aram of the Arameans or Syrians. For a sufficient specimen of such investigations, see Wells's "Historical Geography of the Old Testament," and Bochart's "Phaleg." The twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, as far as it goes, has been much relied upon for illustration.

* Gen. x. 6, 13.

† x. 8-12.

‡ x. 15-19.—The reported derivation of the Egyptians, as well as the people of Canaan, from a disgraced ancestor (comp. x. 6, 13 with ix. 22-24), may have been a fact to which Moses was not unwilling to call attention.

§ See above, p. 27.

|| Josephus, "Antiq. Judaic." lib. ii. cap. 9, § 1.

purpose, as affording evidence, that, at the time of its composition, the Deity was already known by his name *Jehovah*; and that he was even then regarded as extending a providential and retributive superintendence over human affairs and conduct. Further, in a somewhat different light from any thing which had preceded, it represented Jehovah as the universal Deity, the God, not of one nation, but of all men, declaring, as it did, that it was by his behest that the various families of man had been dispersed to their several habitations.

The passage, which next precedes this, furnishes an incomplete account of the posterity of Shem, along with a similar account of descendants of Noah in the two other lines. That which next follows, derived from the other source,* confines itself to the line of Shem, which it professes to trace, through a series of eight intervening names,† from him to Abraham. Here, again, as far as the two accounts can be compared, we have occasion to observe a repetition, which adds nothing to the reader's knowledge. They correspond in their genealogies as far as to the third generation from Shem in the line of Arphaxad, though

* Of this, the similar structure of xi. 10–26 and v. 3–32 is a sufficient indication. And as, in the one case, there are ten names from Adam to Noah, both included, so, in the other, there are ten from Shem, Noah's son, to Abraham.—There occurs in this passage, a variation of the Septuagint and Samaritan readings from the Hebrew, in respect to the statements of the ages of the patriarchs, of a character similar to that which has been mentioned as being found in chapter v.—It is obvious to remark, that, as the genealogy is brought down to times nearer to authentic history, and of the composition of the record, the asserted length of life almost regularly diminishes; and after Terah, Abraham's father, no person is represented in Genesis to have attained the age of more than a hundred and eighty years.

† The Septuagint version, which Luke (iii. 36) follows, has nine names, inserting Cainan between Arphaxad and Salah. But the genealogies in the first book of Chronicles (i. 18, 24) agree with the Hebrew text of Genesis.

from that point they diverge from each other, the first proceeding to name the posterity of Joktan, the second, that of another son of Eber, named Peleg, from whom Abraham is said to have descended. Respecting the reason of the preservation, by Moses, of this passage, it appears sufficient to say, that, professing, as it did, to give an account of the descent, from a remote ancestor, of the father of the faithful, it could not fail, however obviously blended with error (as in its statements of the longevity of the patriarchs), to be esteemed by him as of great value, and as fitly constituting (in the absence of more exact information) the introduction to that history of Abraham, to which he was next to proceed.

In conducting this discussion, it will be observed, that I have confined myself to what I conceive alone to belong to the office of the Biblical critic, viz. an inquiry into the purpose and meaning of the Jewish lawgiver, in making his compilation of earlier historical materials relating to the period before the birth of Abraham. To explain, in all particulars, the meaning of the original authors of those documents, is, at this distant time, out of our power (we could not even affirm that it was understood, in all particulars, in the time of Moses himself); to defend that meaning, in many parts where it is clear, is impossible; and both attempts would be equally foreign to our purpose as students of divine revelation. And I am sensible, that the endeavour which I have made to explain the purpose of Moses, in giving to his compilation its actual form, has not resulted in furnishing a reply to all the questions which it may suggest. From the nature of the case, this could not fail to be. The view upon which the whole course of remark has proceeded is, that Moses, in what he has here collected

and preserved, had reference to opinions and practices existing among, or important to be enforced upon, his people;—opinions and practices, with which, in this age of the world, we have so partial an acquaintance, that our *middle term of comparison* is defective. Persuaded as I am, that the method of investigation here pursued is the correct one, I have no doubt, that the labors of others may reduce it to further applications; but perfect satisfaction respecting the meaning of Moses, in this part of his work, could only be had through such an acquaintance with the condition of that society, in and for which he wrote, as is not now attainable.

LECTURE XXIII.

THE TIME OF ABRAHAM.

GENESIS XI. 27.—XXV. 10.

OBJECTS CONTEMPLATED BY MOSES IN COLLECTING THE NARRATIVES RELATING TO THE AGE OF ABRAHAM.—THEY SHOWED THE DIVINE FAVOR ENJOYED BY THAT PATRIARCH,—THE RIGHT OF HIS POSTERITY TO THE COUNTRY OF CANAAN,—AND THE ANTIQUITY OF SOME DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF THE LAW.—INQUIRY RESPECTING THE SOURCES OF MOSES' INFORMATION,—AND WHETHER TWO CHIEF SOURCES CAN BE DESIGNATED, AS IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.—EARLY LIFE OF ABRAHAM.—HIS EMIGRATION TOWARDS CANAAN AND SETTLEMENT IN THAT COUNTRY.—HIS VISIT TO EGYPT, AND RETURN THENCE.—HIS PARTITION OF THE TERRITORY WITH LOT.—HIS INTERVIEW WITH MELCHISEDEK.—HIS COVENANT WITH JEHOVAH.—DISMISSION OF HAGAR, AND BIRTH OF ISHMAEL.—INSTITUTION OF CIRCUMCISION.—VISIT OF JEHOVAH TO ABRAHAM.—DESTRUCTION OF SUDOM.—VISIT OF ABRAHAM TO GERAR.—BIRTH AND CIRCUMCISION OF ISAAC.—DISPUTE AND TREATY BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH.—TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH IN THE COMMAND TO SACRIFICE ISAAC.—DEATH AND BURIAL OF SARAH.—MARRIAGE OF ISAAC.—SECOND MARRIAGE AND DEATH OF ABRAHAM.

THE passage, to which we next proceed, relates to the time of Abraham, the head and founder of the Jewish race. Whatever had been transmitted, either in writing or by oral tradition, respecting the deeds and fortunes of that patriarch, we should expect to find Moses studious to collect, and to place in a suitable form for preservation among the people. Even if he understood, that, during the six or seven centuries between Abraham's time and his own, those records and traditions, or some of them, had shared

the common lot of the materials of ancient history, and that later additions had been made to the original truth, that would be no reason for his forbearing to use them, seeing that, such as they were, they were the best testimony which survived respecting the occurrences of that earlier age. And if he found, that different narratives which had come into his possession reported the same transaction with some difference of circumstances, we might anticipate (what I think we shall find to have been actually done), that he would incorporate both into his writings, without making any attempt (which in his day, could not but be fruitless,) to reconcile their diversities.

Objects more definite, and more appropriate to the immediate purpose, than that of merely giving a sketch of the life of the great progenitor of the nation, were accomplished by Moses, through the collection of ancient narratives in this part of the book of Genesis. The character in which, by his ministry, Jehovah was presented to his people, was that of the *God of their fathers*, the God of their nation, from its very origin. Accordingly, it became him to inform or remind them, upon such evidence as had been handed down, of the original adoption of Abraham by Jehovah to be his chosen servant, of the communications which had from time to time been made, and the prospects of the future which had been opened, to that patriarch, and in short, of the various divine dealings with him, both providential and miraculous. And this, accordingly, we shall find to be a subject largely brought to view in this portion of the history.

A third important purpose of this portion of Genesis, and one which we shall find to be pursued through the remainder of the book, was to exhibit to the Jews of Moses' time their right to the country, which, under

his guidance, they were about to invade. This right is, by distinct implication, repeatedly represented as resting on two grounds ; the divine gift of the territory to their ancestors, and its actual occupation by those ancestors. While Abraham was yet at a distance from Canaan, Jehovah had invited him to emigrate to that country, and establish himself therein. Arrived there, he had been told by his divine Protector, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."* He had become sole proprietor of the soil by a peaceable arrangement with Lot, the associate of his emigration ; he had surveyed it by traversing its whole extent ; and he had marked it for his own and his posterity's by such monuments and other fixtures as suited the habits of the time. He had provided there a tomb ; he had digged wells ; and, by the erection of altars in various places, he had at once recorded a claim upon those spots as his own, and consecrated them as belonging to Jehovah, his patron deity.

These appear to have been the great objects of the portion of Genesis now before us. Further ; as in the division already remarked on, so in this, there occur passages, from time to time, suited to confirm the authority, or recommend the observance, of single doctrines or provisions of the Law.

As to the authorities possessed by Moses for his compilation of this memoir of Abraham, it is obvious to remark, that, whatever was their number, and their character in other respects, they can only be referred with any probability to an Israelitish origin.† None

* Genesis, xiii. 15.

† This remark, it will be observed, applies only to that portion of the passage which contains the memoir of Abraham. Interspersed with that memoir is other related matter, which may very conveniently be referred

but descendants of Abraham would be interested to preserve such records of his life. None but descendants from him in the line of Isaac and Jacob, would be careful for the preservation of what assigned to that line such a preference over the other branches of Abraham's posterity.

That Moses, for the portion of Genesis which remains to be examined, used different authorities, appears, I think, incontrovertibly, from his having, in some instances, given two statements of the same transaction, differing in some circumstances from each other.* But, on the other hand, it does not seem to me, that we are able any further to designate, as in the previous portion, the number of these authorities. With a few exceptions, the narrative henceforward has an appearance of continuity, the repetitions occupying a small space, compared with the whole. The fact, that sometimes one name is used for the Deity, and sometimes the other, when both were suitable to be used by a Jewish writer, and both were actually in use through the whole period of the national history, is not alone sufficient ground for a discrimination, in the absence of other distinguishing marks. There are long passages which do not furnish any name of God, and which, therefore, upon this basis, we should be unable to class;† and there is one which gives him a different title from those which we have seen to be in use.‡ Once more; there are instances, in which

to a foreign source. The thirty-fourth chapter, for instance, may have been obtained, in times antecedent to Moses, from the people of Canaan, and the thirty-sixth (or all of it which is genuine), either before or in his time, from the Edomites.

* Comp. Gen. xii. 10–20, with xx. 1–18; xvi. 4–16, with xxi. 9–21; xvii. 17, with xviii. 12–15 and xxi. 6; xxi. 22–33, with xxvi. 23–33.

† See, e. g. chaps. xxiii. xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii.

‡ xiv.

it appears certain, that one original writer has used both names of the Deity. To suppose the contrary, — that is, to attribute to different writers the respective portions of one narrative in which different names of God occur, — would be to understand each writer as having left his account altogether incomplete. Either portion, without the other, would be so unmeaning, that it is impossible to conceive of it as having been thus written.*

In the passage before us, we are first told of the condition of a certain Terah, whose line had been before traced from Shem, one of the sons of Noah, and who was an inhabitant of a city called Ur, in Chaldea; his family consisting of three sons (of whom Abraham was one), a grandson named Lot, and two daughters-in-law, one of them wife of Abraham, who was childless. Terah, accompanied by Abraham, Sarah (Abraham's wife), and Lot, whose father Haran was previously dead, left his home to establish himself in the land of Canaan. He advanced, however, no further than to a place called Haran (probably so named by himself in memory of his deceased son),† where he died. Thence Abraham was summoned by God to proceed to Canaan, where he was assured, that his posterity should become a great nation, and a blessing to all the earth. Accompanied by Lot, he entered and traversed that country, building altars in it at two different spots, for the worship of the divinity who had established him in this broad and rich domain. ‡

* See Gen. xvii. 1-3; xx. 17-xxi. 2; 22-33; xxii. 1-13, compared with 14-19. In the histories of Abraham and Isaac, the Deity is, for the most part, called by the name *Jehovah*; in those of Jacob and Joseph, for the most part, by the name *God*.

† In our present Hebrew text, however, the one name begins with a ה; the other with a א.

‡ Chap. xi. 27-xii. 9. — The Jews of later times understood the fam-

After a time, the history relates, that Abraham, on the occasion of a famine, journeyed into Egypt, whence

ily of Terah to have been idolaters. Josh. xxiv. 2. — In xi. 29, we are told who was the husband of Milcah, daughter of Haran, but not who married his other daughter Iscah; while, on the other hand, it is remarkable, that we nowhere read the parentage of Sarah, mother of the Jewish race. The Jewish commentators accordingly, and some Christians, understand Sarah and Iscah to have been the same person. But this kind of argument overlooks the fragmentary character of the composition. — “*To go into the land of Canaan*” (xi. 31); equally well rendered, *as one goes*, or “in the direction of the land of Canaan.” And this latter rendering (which omits the implication of Terah’s having intended to go to Canaan when he left Chaldea,) is somewhat favored by xii. 1; “And the Lord [that is, at Haran, where the family “dwelt” after leaving Chaldea,] said unto Abram,” &c.; where our translators have rendered, “Now the Lord *had said* unto Abram,” &c. in order to reconcile the statement, which they thought it important to do, with the statement of Stephen in Acts, vii. 2, 3. — “Abram was seventy and five years old,” &c. (xii. 4). But if he was born when Terah was seventy years old, (xi. 26,) and did not leave Haran till his father had died there at the age of two hundred and five, (xi. 32,) he must have been at that time more than a hundred and thirty-five years old. The view which I take of the structure of the book does not require me to reconcile this discrepancy. I can have no hesitation in admitting, that different and contradictory statements from ancient times had reached, and been recorded by, Moses. The commentators reconcile it by saying, that Abraham may not have been Terah’s oldest son; and that, though Terah, according to xi. 26, had no children till he was seventy years old, Abraham may have been born sixty or seventy years later yet. — “The Canaanite was *then* in the land” (xii. 6). This, say they who argue for a recent origin of the book, implies, that, at the time of its being written, the Canaanite was there no longer. But (not to urge, that the sentence may have been a later addition), it admits perfectly well of the interpretation, “The Canaanite was *already* there.” He was there *then* as well as now; the intention being to apprise the reader, that, though there, he was not there in any such manner as to prevent, or so much as to oppose, the occupation of the country by Abraham. It is probable, (see Michaelis’ “*Mosaisches Recht*,” B. 2, cap. 3, § 4,) that parties of Canaanites, a commercial, and not an agricultural people, whose original home, according to Herodotus, (Lib. 1, § 1, Lib. 7, § 89,) was on the shores of the Red Sea, had, as early as Abraham’s time, established trading posts along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. But they laid no claim to the open country, to the occupation of which by Abraham, it was to the historian’s purpose to remark, their presence presented no obstacle.

however, when that occasion had passed, he returned again to Canaan, as his home. A special interest which this narrative had for Moses, is, I suppose, to be found in the analogy between it and the actual condition of the people for whom he was writing. They, too,—that is, their nearer ancestors, Jacob and his twelve sons,—had been driven to Egypt by a scarcity of food; but, as Abraham had returned, after that exigency had passed, to reclaim a home which only for a season he had left, so they were on their way to recover a country, which, through the lapse of a longer time, they had never ceased to consider as their own.*

Restored to Canaan, Abraham was prompt to renew there the worship of his guardian god;† and the narrative proceeds with an account, which derives its interest for those for whom Moses recorded it, from the fact, that it answers an important question relating to their right, derived by inheritance, to the whole

* Gen. xii. 10—xiii. 1. — How it was, that Pharaoh (xii. 17, 18) knew from the plagues which had fallen on his house, that Sarah was not Abraham's sister but his wife, and that these visitations were designed to punish him for what he had done innocently under a misconception of Sarah's relation to Abraham, is a question of difficulty upon the received principles of interpretation of this book, but not for one who adopts the views which I have maintained. The same remark is to be made of the exceeding beauty of Sarah, which not only created, but which it was anticipated would create, such a sensation in Pharaoh's court. She is related to have been but ten years younger than her husband, (xvii. 17,) and her husband to have been at this time more than seventy-five years of age (xii. 4).—The coincidence of what tradition reported to have taken place in a remote age for the protection, in Egypt, of the ancestor of the Jewish people, (xii. 17,) with what had recently occurred under their own eyes, (Ex. vii.—xii.,) gave to the passage a peculiar interest.

† Gen. xiii. 2—4. Abraham had returned from Egypt, after a temporary absence to the place where his "tent had been at the beginning" (3), and "unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first" (4). So his posterity were now returning from Egypt, to reclaim the site of their patrimonial tents and altars.

soil of Canaan. It had already been recorded, that Abraham and Lot had invested themselves with a right to that country by actual occupation. But if so, why was not the country as much Lot's as Abraham's? And if such were the case, why were not the Ammonites and Moabites, descended from Lot, as much entitled to claim it, in Moses' time, for their patrimony, as the Israelites, descended from Abraham? The question was answered by an ancient history. An early amicable partition had been made, in which the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea had been selected by Lot as his residence, while Abraham retained the open country between that lake and the Mediterranean, which country, after that transaction, was specially secured to him and his posterity by another divine promise.*

The next passage, viz. the fourteenth chapter, records a martial expedition of Abraham, for the rescue from captivity, of his nephew Lot, in the sequel of which he made a gift of a tenth part of his spoils to Melchisedek, who was at once "King of Salem," and "priest of the Most High God." The value which this narrative had in Moses' view, leading him to insert it in his collection, I conceive is to be found in three particulars; 1. that it exhibits the vigorous, generous, and devout character of the nation's first patriarch, and the wealth and greatness to which he had already attained; 2. that

* Gen. xiii. 5–18. "The Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land" (7), and yet (9) "the whole land" was subject to a division between Abraham and Lot; a statement which presents no difficulty, if the case be viewed as it has been above represented. The settlements of the tribes above-mentioned were but dispersed trading establishments. Abraham and Lot (whose wealth also, the historian is careful to record, consisted in flocks, and herds, and tents) needed a large territory for pasturage; and substantially the whole country was before them for that purpose.

it furnishes an early precedent for the institution of tithes (so prominent a provision of the law), and recommends it by the example of the honored progenitor of the race ; and 3. and above all, that it represents the doctrine of one God, one *universal* "*possessor* [or sovereign] of heaven and earth," of whom Melchisedek was the priest, as being held by some, at least, of the inhabitants of Canaan in that early time.*

In the fifteenth chapter we read of a communication from Jehovah to Abraham, much more full and solemn than any which had preceded. The patriarch is related to have been assured in a vision, that, though as yet childless, he shall have a son, who shall be the father of a numerous posterity, destined to inherit from him the Canaanitish territory ; and the more fully to satisfy the mind of Abraham that the promise will be kept, it is ratified by ceremonies constituting the most solemn form known to antiquity for confirming engagements by an oath.† At the same time, he is related to have been informed, that it would only be after an interruption of

* By *Salem* (xiv. 18) it is probable that the place was intended, afterwards called *Jerusalem*. — In 22, Abraham is represented as declaring that he, like Melchisedek, acknowledged one "most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth," and that this God was known to him under the name of *Jehovah*.

† With xv. 9, 10, 17, comp. Jer. xxxiv. 18. When two parties to a covenant passed between the severed carcasses of victims, the meaning of their act, expressed in words, appears to have been ; "May we be cut in twain, like these animals, if we prove false to our engagement." By the "smoking furnace" and "burning lamp, that passed between those pieces," we are undoubtedly to understand a manifestation of the Deity, performing his part in this ceremony. Such were the rude notions of the times in which the account originated, or through which it had proceeded. — The animals, which, according to this account, Abraham had been directed to immolate, were of the same description with those specified in Moses' law of sacrifices (comp. Lev. i. 14 ; iii. 1 ; iv. 28 ; vi. 6) ; and thus the tradition lent authority to this law. "The birds divided he not" (Gen. xv. 10) ; his method of proceeding corresponding, even in this particular, with what the law directed in Lev. i. 17.

four hundred years of servitude in a foreign land, that his posterity would be brought to take permanent possession of the country. The Israelites are thus apprized by Moses, that, if an ancient history was to be credited, the bondage under which they had so long groaned, and from which they had just escaped, had been part of the discipline, designed for them, from the first, under the wise providence of their guardian God, though, in the account of the prediction to Abraham, Egypt is not specified by name as the scene of the people's oppression. The idea of a *covenant*, such as, under Moses' mediation, the people had lately entered into with Jehovah, is also represented as having been communicated to Abraham, from the earliest time, in connexion with the engagement to plant his posterity in Canaan.*

The sixteenth chapter, relating to the birth of Ishmael, Abraham's eldest son, was important to the Jews of Moses' time, inasmuch as it showed, that the ancestor of the Ishmaelites, who at that period inhabited the southern border of Palestine, had no claim to compete with them as heirs of Abraham. In comparison with their forefather, Isaac, the progenitor of the Ishmaelites was base-born; he had not been reared by Abraham as the future head of his house, but, on the contrary, his mother had been dismissed with indignity

* Gen. xv. 18. — I say, "the people had lately entered into with Jehovah," supposing that Moses wrote Genesis during the period of the wanderings in the wilderness. If one were to venture on a conjecture respecting the progress of the composition of the Pentateuch, not an improbable one would be, that the first record made was that mentioned in Ex. xvii. 14; that this was afterwards continued from time to time, as, in the progress of events, new materials were furnished; and that the prefatory part, both in Genesis and Exodus, was arranged at some period of leisure, during the migration. — The words (16), "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full," in which it will be observed that the verb is supplied by our translators, have strongly the appearance of a gloss of later origin.

from the family before his birth; and it had been thus early announced to her, that, though his posterity should be numerous, they should lead a wild and predatory life, and dwell apart from the rest of the race. Thus, what had before been shown concerning Lot's posterity, was now shown concerning that of Ishmael; they were no legitimate competitors with the posterity of Isaac for a share in the blessings promised by Jehovah to Abraham.*

The seventeenth chapter contains matter which was full of interest to the contemporaries of Moses, bearing further witness as it did to God's having promised to their ancestor, for the occupation of his posterity, the territory which they were now proceeding to possess (a

* "She had an handmaid, an Egyptian" (xvi. 1). If the Jews had lately groaned under an Egyptian bondage, one of their old traditions tells them, that anciently the opposite relation had subsisted; their ancestor had been the mistress, and an Egyptian the slave. — "The angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed" &c. (10). For observations on the scriptural use of the word *angel*, showing the propriety of representing a thing to be said or done by God, or by his angel, indifferently, see Vol. I. p. 104, note *. And for a confirmation of that view, drawn from a Jewish interpretation of the word, see Maimonides, ("More Nebochim," Pars II. cap. 6,) who explains, that any instrument of the Divine agency is properly called an angel, and particularizes instances in which the elements, irrational beings, and men, are so denominated. — "In the presence [literally, *in the face*] of all his brethren," (12). We are probably to understand by these words, "*to the eastward* of all his brethren," the points of compass being reckoned with reference to the face being turned towards the east. In this case, as the Ishmaelitic territory was actually south of the domain of Abraham, *the brethren* of Ishmael must mean the Egyptian relations of his mother; and, indeed, at this time, he had no brothers, strictly so called. — "Have I also here looked *after him* that seeth me" (13). The original word corresponding to *after*, is the same (with a different Masoretic pointing of one letter) which in our version is the subject of the deplorable rendering in Ex. xxxiii. 23. See my exposition of that passage, Vol. I. p. 227. I take the sense here to be, "Have I seen [have I been told of] *the future proceedings* [the purposes for coming time] of him who has now graciously looked upon me?" The reference in Hagar's words is to the information related to have been conveyed to her in 10-12.

fact of which they could not be reminded too frequently), and to his having anciently established a covenant with Abraham, as he had been recently doing with themselves; * a covenant, as they were further informed, ratified by the rite of circumcision, which their law, lately given, prescribed as the distinguishing observance of their race; † and limited in its benefits to Isaac and his posterity, — though Isaac was yet unborn, — to the exclusion of the elder line of Ishmael. ‡

In the eighteenth chapter we read of Abraham's being visited in his tent "in the plains of Mamre" by three men, to whom he gave a hospitable reception. One of them proved to be Jehovah in a human form, who made him a promise similar to what he is said to have made in the preceding chapter, that on the next year his wife Sarah should become the mother of a son. We have here another instance of Moses' resort to different sources, for evidence respecting the same general fact, and of the collection, by him, of statements varying in their details. Different traditions had preserved different anecdotes explanatory of the origin of the name *Isaac*. One tradition implied, that the name had been given,

* Gen. xvii. 1–8. It is not improbable that this passage, in which, with one exception (1) the name *God* is used for the Deity, should be regarded but as a different account of the same transaction related in xv. (1–6, 18), which employs the title *Jehovah*. — "Neither shall thy name any more be called *Abram*" &c. (5). אֲבִרָם signifies *exalted father*; אֲבִרָהִם *father of a multitude*; the two last syllables of the latter word consisting of a root still extant in the Arabic, though not in the Hebrew.

† xvii. 9–14, 23–27. For remarks on the origin and import of this rite, see Vol. I. pp. 202, 203.

‡ xvii. 15–22. No sufficient account has been given of the names of Abraham's wife, in verse 15. The common etymology, which represents the first to mean *my princess*, and the second, *a princess*, is altogether unsatisfactory. — "Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed" (17); here is an account of the name given to Isaac, the word יִצְחָק (the root of יִצְחָק:) signifying *he laughed*.

because Abraham had *laughed*, on receiving the promise of posterity. According to another, it was Sarah, whose joy, on hearing the communication that she was to become a mother, had given rise to the name; the connexion of which with a fact so trivial, fully explains why the latter should be so carefully related.*

The account, which occupies the latter portion of the chapter, of the successful intercession of Abraham, that Sodom should not be punished for its crying iniquity, provided only ten good men should be found in it, deserved preservation on account of its exhibition of the generous character of the patriarch; the interest which it exhibited him as having with the Judge of men; and the character in which it presented Jehovah, as being in the view of those ancient times when the history was framed, on the one hand a moral governor, and at the same time a placable sovereign, and, on the other, as being not merely a national god, with a limited jurisdiction (agreeably to a familiar view of the ancient idolatries), but as having power, and extending a providence, over the foreign city of Sodom, as much as over the precincts of Abraham's tent. A comparison was also naturally suggested between that sin of the people of Sodom which old tradition declared Jehovah to have punished, and the sinful practices of those Canaanites, whose territory, under the guidance of Jehovah, the people of Israel were now about to invade.

In the nineteenth chapter, we read how the two attendants of Jehovah, being sent in advance of him,

* Comp. Gen. xvii. 15-19, with xviii. 9-15. In the former passage the Deity is called *God*, in the latter, *Jehovah*; a circumstance, which of itself, — though (as above explained) it does not make out a proof of the narratives being from independent sources, — creates a presumption to that effect, which, in the present instance is corroborated by the difference in the representation.

were received and hospitably entertained by Lot, and, becoming themselves the subjects of a flagitious attempt of its abandoned citizens, were compelled to confirm the report, which had reached their master, of the wickedness of the place. They accordingly proceeded to denounce its doom, first rescuing Lot and his family from the impending ruin. Being thus rescued, they retired to a neighbouring city, where an incestuous connexion between Lot and his two daughters was the origin of two races, — the Ammonites and Moabites, — who in Moses' time had become numerous on the borders of Canaan, and with whom he desired his people, for their own good, to have little intercourse.* To preserve the record of the ignoble and odious circumstances of their origin, was one method of exciting a salutary prejudice. To hold them up to contempt as an incestuous brood, was to provide some additional security against the contamination of their idolatries.

No careful reader can fail to be struck with the strongly *anthropomorphic* cast of this passage. Jehovah, journeying like an opulent traveller with two attendants, approaches Abraham's tent in the heat of noon, and accepts his hospitable offers of water for his feet, and refreshment for his hunger. In recompense of this entertainment, he makes a promise to his attentive hosts of that blessing on which their hearts are most set, while he rebukes Sarah for her incredulity, and the indecorous levity of its expression. The interview over, he proceeds on his way towards Sodom, and tells Abraham,

* Comp. Deut. xxiii. 3. As God had spared Lot and his family of old (Gen. xix. 15, 16, 29), so, perhaps Moses meant to hint, Lot's descendants, at the present time, should suffer no violence from the Israelites; comp. Deut. ii. 9, 19. If I propose no explanation of xix. 26, the reader will not need to be reminded, that the view which I take of this book does not make it incumbent on the critic to maintain the credibility of all its contents.

who has respectfully accompanied him, that his purpose is, to see whether tidings, which have been brought to him of the iniquity of that place, are well founded. Like an obliged and grateful guest, he listens patiently, as they walk, to Abraham's solicitation for mercy for his neighbours. He sends his servants forward to make the scrutiny on which he is intent; and, the truth of the unfavorable reports being ascertained by their experience, he proceeds to the accomplishment of his work of vengeance, sparing only the family in which his messengers had found safety and protection. What intelligent friend to the divine mission of Moses will be prepared to say, that such views of God and of his agency as are presented in these particulars, were set down by him as just representations? Is he not far more satisfactorily understood to have preserved them as traditions relating to a distant period; traditions exposed through the intervening ages to all those influences, which in such cases accumulate circumstantial errors upon a basis of essential truth, but still deserving to be remembered on account of their containing the belief of an ancient time respecting the character of Jehovah as the witness and punisher of wickedness, and respecting his relation, on the one hand, to Abraham as his friend, and, on the other hand, to the nations at large, as their righteous and all-powerful governor?

In the twentieth chapter we have simply a repetition, as I think, of the same narrative which is given at the close of the twelfth, only with some difference of circumstances, the history having come down through different channels.* In both cases, Abraham, having gone out of Canaan for a time, is represented as having been

* The name *Jehovah* characterizes the first of the two narratives, the name *God* the second.

deprived of Sarah, who passed for his sister, by the king of the country, who was enamoured of her. But in the one case, the king was Pharaoh, and the country Egypt; in the other, the king Abimelech, the country Gerar. The great difficulty of adopting the common view of Moses' first book as a consecutive history, which he designed to present, on his personal authority, as circumstantially true, is manifest in the present instance, from the fact, that the inconvenience sustained by Abraham in consequence of the fascination of Sarah's beauty, is, on that supposition, represented to have been subsequent to the promise made to her of the birth of Isaac, an event which seemed to her incredible on account of her advanced age.*

The twenty-first chapter, after mentioning briefly the birth of Isaac and his circumcision on the eighth day, agreeably to that rule, previously given to Abraham, which afterwards became a provision of the law of Mo-

* I think it probable, that Moses designed his repetitions of this narrative in its different forms to bear upon a custom widely prevailing in his day, that of marrying a sister, and to corroborate his law against such alliances in Lev. xviii. 9. Diodorus Siculus says, ("Bibliotheca," Lib. i. § 27,) that marriages between brother and sister were lawful in Egypt, and according to Lucian ("Opera," Vol. III. p. 71. Edit. Bipont.), they were permitted among the Assyrians and Persians. If the practice of other nations was liable to be quoted by the Israelites, contemporaries of Moses, in excuse for violating his law upon this point, it was to his purpose to show, that however it might be at present, the fact of a man's declaring a woman to be his sister, had anciently, among those nations themselves, been considered as equivalent to declaring, that she was not his wife. See Gen. xii. 18, 19; xx. 2-5; xxvi. 9, 10. Another object of Moses might be to show, that the adulterous practices which his law forbade (Ex. xx. 14. Lev. xx. 10), however approved now by other nations, had anciently been held by them in abhorrence. See Gen. xii. 18, 19; xx. 5, 9; xxvi. 10, 11. — "Behold, *he* is to thee a covering of the eyes" (xx. 16). For *he* we should read *it*, denoting Abimelech's present of money. The meaning I understand to be, that the money should be appropriated to the purchase of a veil, by wearing which hereafter, Sarah should give intimation of her being a married woman.

ses,* proceeds to a narrative of Hagar's expulsion from Abraham's home, and suffering for want of water in the wilderness of Beersheba, which I take to be only another version of a history, already commented on, in the sixteenth chapter. In the one case, Hagar's banishment is represented to have taken place before the birth of her son; in the other, after. In the one place, it is represented as the punishment of her own insolence, which gave offence to Sarah; in the other, of that of her son. But all the other occurrences described, and especially the circumstances of the interview between Hagar and the angel, are so much the same, that it seems unsuitable to regard them in any other light than as statements of the same transaction; which in a course of generations had taken a different complexion, by being transmitted through distinct channels.†

The narrative with which the twenty-first chapter concludes, of a dispute between Abraham and Abimelech, a prince of the country bordering on Abraham's towards the south, concerning a certain well, had a threefold value for the contemporaries of Moses, demanding its preservation. It represented the conse-

* Comp. Gen. xvii. 12; Lev. xii. 3.

† In the first of the two relations, *Jehovah* is the name given to the Deity; in the second, *God*. — In Gen. xxi. 5–7, we seem to have a third variety (comp. xvii. 17. xviii. 12) of the account which had descended from antiquity respecting the origin of Isaac's name. — In xxi. 9, the word which our translators render "mocking," is literally *laughing*, being formed from the root קִיץ; perhaps we are here to recognise yet another form of the traditionary etymology of *Isaac*. — The verse xxi. 14, may have been intended by Moses to operate as a hint, to the following effect; "In observing the precept of my Law respecting the provision to be made for a dismissed slave (Deut. xv. 12–14), you will but imitate the example of your great progenitor." — "His mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt," (21). Both the mother and the wife of Ishmael having been Egyptians, the implied inference was, that the Israelites would not desire to contract alliances with his descendants. Comp. Deut. xxiii. 7, 8.

quence and power of Abraham to have been such at that early period, as made it desirable to a neighbouring monarch to conciliate his friendship. It showed, that he had claimed a certain important spot of the territory, towards which the Jews, under Moses' conduct, were proceeding, as included within the southern border of his land. And it told that he had consecrated that spot by celebrating there the worship of his own Deity.*

The twenty-second chapter exhibits a continuous, well-connected narrative, free from repetition or other redundancy. Either half of the chapter would be an incomplete and unsatisfactory fragment without the other; yet, in the first ten verses, the Deity is uniformly called *God*, while in the next nine, the name *Jehovah* repeatedly and almost solely occurs.† The narrative here preserved was of the utmost value to the contemporaries of Moses, illustrating and enforcing, as it did, by the cogent example of their venerated ancestor, a weighty moral, suited to their existing circumstances. While their faith in the promised divine protection was so superficial and wavering, Abraham was related in ancient story to have entertained a per-

* The importance seemingly attached by Moses to the fact, that Abraham had occupied Beersheba (comp. Gen. xxii. 19), is probably to be explained by the consideration, that Beersheba was on the southern border of the promised land, of which a common designation was "the country 'from Dan [on the north] to Beersheba.'"

† This remark will be understood to bear upon what I esteem the erroneous theory, that two documents, known by the names given in them respectively to the Deity, can be traced through the book of Genesis. — "As it is said to this day, 'In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen'" (14). If the verb in the two clauses of this verse be pointed uniformly, the latter will read, "In the mountain the Lord shall see"; and Jerome appears to have had a correct view of the sense, when he says ("Quæst. in Gen." *ad loc.*), "This among the Hebrews passed into a proverb, so that when they are in trouble, and wish for divine aid, they say, 'God will see in the mountain'; that is, as he pitied Abraham, he will pity us."

fect confidence, that God's engagement to raise him up a numerous progeny would be fulfilled, even though Isaac, the son of his hope, should be put to death; and, while they were willing to be withdrawn from obedience to God's commands by every little temptation, he was immovably true to his allegiance, even though it required to be proved by the sacrifice, by his own hand, of the child of his fondest affections. And the issue, as the account further implies, was what the righteous may always expect it to be. God had withdrawn the burden which his faithful worshipper had shown himself so willing to bear, as soon as that willingness had been fully manifested; and had rewarded his loyalty by an emphatic renewal of the promise of the future greatness of his race. — The chapter concludes with an account of intelligence which reached Abraham respecting the family of his brother Nahor, who had remained behind in Chaldea; a statement which has reference to what we are presently to read of, arrangements made for a matrimonial alliance for Isaac.

In the twenty-third chapter we have merely an account of the death of Sarah, and the consequent purchase by Abraham of a cave and its precincts for a burying-place. It appears, that he recognised the right of a community of Hittites, or rather of one of their number, to this land, and that, accordingly, having fixed his choice upon it, he proceeded to possess himself of it by a purchase, made under such circumstances of form and publicity as were suitable to substantiate his claim.* A possession of this kind was of course intended for perpetuity, and might well be regarded with a

* Gen. xxiii. 16 – 18. From the first of these verses it would appear, that this tradition referred the life of Abraham to a time before coined money was in use.

peculiar and sacred estimation by those to whom it had descended as an inheritance. It would seem, that no more moving argument could be addressed by Moses to his followers, to inspire in them alacrity and constancy, when, before the invasion, they were hovering on the border of the promised land, near to Hebron, than to say to them, "There, close at hand, are the sepulchres of the father and mother of our race; shall strangers and idolaters be permitted any longer to call that sacred spot their own?"

The twenty-fourth chapter contains a full account of the arrangements for the marriage of Isaac, made during his father's lifetime. Independently of all accompanying circumstances, there was, for those for whom Moses wrote, matter of strong interest in the statements, which tradition had preserved respecting this alliance of parents, from whom the whole nation traced its descent. The divine guidance, which had attended Abraham's mission to the country of his birth on this occasion, and had given a happy issue to the enterprise, made an appeal to the people to be faithful to the responsibilities of their Heaven-directed origin; and the extreme solicitude of Abraham to prevent his son from forming an alliance with the Canaanites, was a course virtually recommended in the narrative to the imitation of his posterity. And in the progress of the transaction, his purpose, that Canaan should be the permanent habitation of Isaac and his line, had been emphatically expressed.*

* Gen. xxiv. 8. — "The servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master" (9). The form of oaths is a thing of arbitrary institution. This form appears to have prevailed in those early times; comp. xlvii. 29. — With xxiv 15, comp. xi. 27, 29; xxii. 20–23. — "Then Laban and Bethuel answered" &c. (50). The prominent part, which Laban, brother of Rachel, takes in this transaction, is very reasonably accounted

At the beginning of the next chapter we have an account of a second marriage contracted by Abraham after Sarah's death, attended with a careful mention of the fact, that he did not allow any claims of the children who were its fruit to interfere with the title of Isaac and his line to the undivided territory of Canaan. "Abraham," we are told, "gave all that he had unto Isaac ; but unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country." * This done, at the age of a hundred and seventy-five years, he died, and was buried by Isaac and Ishmael, in the cave of Machpelah, by Sarah's side.

for by Michaelis ("Mosaisches Recht," B. 2, § 83), on the ground of an influence of polygamy upon the relations of domestic society. Females, whose fathers were likely to be under the influence of a stepmother, would naturally look to uterine brothers as their proper protectors. Comp. xxxiv. 13-17, 25. — "Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi" &c. (62). Even so far south as this, then, — is the implication, — had the patrimony of Israel formerly extended ; comp. xvi. 14.

* "She bare him Midian" &c. (Gen. xxv. 2 ; comp. 4). Probably the chief interest, which in Moses' view attached to this account of the posterity of Keturah, was from the circumstance, that among them were the Midianites, with which race he had himself formed a domestic alliance, and his people presently were to have important relations. Ex. ii. 15 ; Numb. xxii. 4 ; xxv. 15-17 ; xxxi. 2-10.

LECTURE XXIV.

THE TIME OF ISAAC.

GENESIS XXV. 11. — XXXV. 29.

ACCOUNT OF THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL, AND OF THEIR SETTLEMENTS. — TITLE OF THE LINE OF JACOB TO CANAAN, TO THE EXCLUSION OF THE LINE OF ESAU. — CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE BIRTH OF ESAU AND JACOB. — ESAU'S VOLUNTARY ALIENATION OF HIS BIRTH-RIGHT. — CONTROVERSY AND TREATY BETWEEN ISAAC AND ABIMELECH. — ARTIFICE OF REBEKAH TO OBTAIN ISAAC'S BLESSING FOR JACOB. — JACOB'S DEPARTURE TO PADAN-ARAM. — HIS VISION AT BETHEL. — HIS MARRIAGES. — HIS FRAUDS PRACTISED UPON LABAN. — HIS RETURN TO PALESTINE, AND INTERVIEW WITH ESAU. — CHANGE OF HIS NAME TO ISRAEL. — ASSAULT OF SIMEON AND LEVI UPON A CANAANITISH CITY. — DEATH AND BURIAL OF RACHEL. — INCEST OF REUBEN. — DEATH OF ISAAC. — INQUIRY INTO THE RIGHT OF THE JEWS TO PALESTINE, AND INTO THE REASON OF MOSES' REPETITIONS OF THE STATEMENT, THAT IT HAD FORMERLY BEEN THE HOME OF THE FATHERS OF THEIR RACE.

THE passage next to be examined relates to the period, through which the life of Isaac extended after the death of Abraham. Respecting Isaac, however, very scanty information seems to have been handed down in the line of his descendants; so that the history passes rapidly from Abraham, the first ancestor of the nation, down to Jacob, the immediate parent of the heads of the twelve tribes, with but a few notices of events in the life of the intervening patriarch.

A few verses, at the beginning of this passage, relate to the descendants of Ishmael, and to the territory which they settled. Such statements, in respect to a people

with whom they had so near consanguinity, would, on that account alone, have an interest for the Israelites, which would make it fit for Moses to preserve them. But, besides, they went to show, that, from the first, the posterity of Ishmael had laid no claim to those possessions in Canaan, which, belonging to Abraham, had been bequeathed by him to the family of his second son.*

As it had before been suitable to record, that the country originally occupied by Abraham and Lot had been appropriated to the former by friendly partition, and that, thus becoming subject to be claimed after his decease by all his sons alike, it had been made by him the inheritance of Isaac alone, — a disposition of it, in which the rest acquiesced, — so now the question was to be determined, what destination awaited it after the death of Isaac. For Isaac also had two sons. If the Israelites of Moses' time were entitled to claim Canaan as their patrimony, it was because it had belonged to their father Jacob. But why to Jacob more than to Esau? Why to Jacob so much as to Esau, since Esau was the older son, and therefore, according to the notions of the time, entitled to the largest share of the parent's property? To this question Moses replies, by presenting to his people ancient records, which testified, that to Jacob and his line the divine promises respecting the possession of that country had been confined; that Esau had voluntarily parted with his birth-right; that, — in consequence of a fraud, it is true, but still in fact, — the parental blessing, to which in those ages

* Gen. xxv. 11 – 18. — "Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi" (11). So far to the south was one of the early settlements of the family. Comp. xvi. 14. — With xxv. 16, comp. xvii. 20. — With xxv. 18, comp. xvi. 12; also see above, p. 73, note *.

great importance was ascribed, had been given to Jacob in preference to his brother; and, finally, that Esau had himself relinquished Canaan to Jacob, and established himself upon the lands on its southern border, on and about Mount Seir. Various other incidents in the life of Jacob are intermingled with those which connect themselves with these topics; and his history, both before and after the death of his father, is pursued to a considerable length. It cannot surprise us, that Moses should be disposed to collect and preserve for his people such notices as had come down, through the intervening four or five centuries, of the history of the immediate parent of the progenitors of the several tribes.*

The subject of the designed superiority of the line of Jacob to that of Esau is presented in a fact, related to have taken place before the birth of either. Rebekah is said to have been divinely assured, that the elder of the twins whom she was to bear should serve the younger.† The peculiar appearance of the elder at his birth is mentioned, with an implied reference to one of the names which afterwards he bore;‡ and the name of the other, Jacob, *the supplanter*, a name indicative of his future fortune, is accounted for by the relation of an

* I may remark here, as conveniently as anywhere, that, from the beginning of the history of Jacob, the narrative has a greater appearance of continuity and completeness than before. This is what we should expect. It had come down to Moses through a shorter space of time; and with the increase of the family, in and after Jacob's age, the channels of tradition were multiplied.

† Gen. xxv. 22, 23.

‡ xxv. 25. The word rendered *red* by our translators, is אֶדְמוֹנִי; and עִדְמוֹנִי, *Edom*, was a name of Esau. The etymology of the name *Esau* is not clear, but it is commonly referred to an Arabic word signifying *hairy*.

incident of the same period.* Then follows the account of that transaction, — so interesting to the posterity of Jacob, — the alienation by Esau of the prerogatives of the eldest born, by a free and deliberate compact with his younger brother, for a consideration, which, however trifling in itself, was motive enough to him, under the circumstances, to make the transfer.†

In the twenty-sixth chapter we have a relation of a divine renewal to Isaac, of the promises before made to Abraham his father, relating to the number of his posterity, to their occupation of Canaan, and to the blessings to be conferred through them on the world.‡ There is also an account of his proceeding to take further possession of the country by digging wells in different parts of it, and pasturing his numerous flocks.§ Nor did he do this, we are told, merely as a grazier, but as an agriculturist, the most definite and unexceptionable way of establishing a claim upon a territory.|| Two other narratives contained in the same chapter, are, I conceive, only a repetition, with some alterations, of histories which had been given before. The deception practised by Isaac upon Abimelech in respect to Rebekah,¶ and the negotiation and treaty between him

* Gen xxv. 26. יַעֲקֹב, *Jacob*, is derived from the root עָקַב, which signifies both *he circumvented*, and *he took by the heel*. Our translators have well preserved this *equivocal* in the word *supplant* (*quasi sub plantâ, under the sole*), which they have adopted in xxvii. 36.

† In xxv. 30, we have a second etymology of the name *Edom*. “Feed me, I pray thee, with that same *red*.” אֶדֹם, *Edom*, means *red*.

‡ xxvi. 1–5, 24.

§ xxvi. 13–25. He also (18) identified and renewed his property in various spots appropriated by his father, by digging again wells which the Philistines had filled up, and restoring their former names. With xxvi. 23, comp. xxi. 33; xxii. 19; also page 80, note*.

|| xxvi. 12.

¶ xxvi. 6–11. In verse 8, יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב, we have another reference to the etymology of the name *Isaac*.

and that prince,* I take to be but different versions of adventures of Abraham, related, the one in the twelfth and again in the twentieth chapter, the other, towards the close of the twenty-first. The affliction occasioned to Isaac and Rebekah by their son Esau's contracting matrimonial alliances with a Canaanitish tribe,† was worthy of record, on account of its connexion with the prohibition of a similar course, addressed by the Law to the Jews of Moses' time.

In the twenty-seventh chapter we read of the successful fraud practised by Rebekah, in behalf of her favorite son Jacob, and with his aid, to obtain from Isaac his father, that blessing which gave to him, instead of Esau, the place of the first-born. To whosoever regards what has been heretofore said, respecting the principles upon which Moses compiled this his first book, as essentially well founded, it is unnecessary to say, that there is no foundation for the idea, that the conduct, or the characters, here brought to view, are presented to us as in any respect worthy of praise or imitation. But here was part of the ancient history of the two races descended from Isaac. Here was an account, descended from those remote times, of the manner in which Jacob and his posterity, through their father's allowance and decree, — expressed in a solemn act of benediction, which, even when he came to know how it had been surreptitiously obtained, he still refused to retract, — had acquired those rights over Esau and his race, which belonged to the position of the first-born in a family. It was an important part of the family history ; and, had it been no more, there was good reason

* Gen. xxvi. 26 — 33. Even the name of the commander of Abimelech's forces is the same in both places ; comp. xxvi. 26, with xxi. 22.

† xxvi. 34, 35.

why Moses should adopt and preserve it. But it was more. It connected itself with the claim, which he set up for his people, of being the heirs, through Jacob their ancestor, of the possessions, in the land of Canaan, of Isaac the father of Jacob. And we need not enter into a consideration of the question, whether a property, thus alienated from Esau in consequence of a fraud, was so alienated that his posterity were precluded from reclaiming it in spite of the exclusive claim of the line of Jacob; for there is no reason to suppose, that the Edomites were inclined to advance pretensions of their own. For aught we learn, they were satisfied with their own possessions about Mount Seir, entertaining no thought of disturbing the present Canaanitish inhabitants. The object, then, of Moses, — to encourage his people to take possession of Canaan, on the ground that it was theirs by inheritance, — practically implied no conflict with the claims of the other race.*

The result of the treachery of Jacob towards Esau is related to have been, that, with his mother's advice

* From Genesis xxvii. 40, the commentators endeavour to extract a meaning prophetic of the conquest of the Edomites by David (2 Sam. viii. 14), and their subsequent successful rebellion against Joram (2 Kings viii. 20). But the words are altogether too indefinite to sustain such an interpretation. They appear only to have been intended to refer to the personal relations of the two brothers; and their sense probably was; "When thou shalt *rove abroad*, thou mayest break his yoke from off thy neck;" that is, only by leaving the parental home, mayest thou escape from his superiority; here his superiority will henceforward be maintained. — "Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?" (45). Here is probably a reference to the institution of *Goeliam* (see Vol. I. p. 419), as already existing in Isaac's time. If Esau should execute his purpose against Jacob, his own life would in turn be forfeit. — "If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, . . . what good shall my life do me?" (46); another reference to the dislike early felt by the chosen race to matrimonial alliances with the Canaanites; comp. xxviii. 1, 6, 8.

and his father's consent, he departed from the family home, to be out of the reach of his injured brother, and repaired to Padan-Aram, the seat of his mother's family ; * and the narrative of his fortunes in that place, and in his journeys to and from it, is pursued through five chapters. We read, that, as he passed the border of the country, to which, leaving it under such circumstances, he might well doubt whether he should ever be permitted to return, his anxious meditations were cheered by a night vision of the Almighty, who appeared to him at the top of a ladder which reached to heaven, assuring him, that the country which he was leaving should ultimately be the inheritance of his numerous posterity, and that the God of his fathers was not merely the patron divinity of the soil they occupied, having a presence and an agency limited to that region (as Jacob, agreeably to the notions of the time, may well have supposed), but, on the contrary, would attend him and protect him in every place whither he might go, and bring him back in safety to the spot which he was leaving. The relation appears even to represent Jacob as being surprised, that Jehovah, the family Deity, should be at such a distance from his father Isaac's tent. "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not." In commemoration of the event, he erected a rude altar, and consecrated the spot to Jehovah's future worship, adding a vow, that, should the promises there made to him be kept, he would devote to Jehovah a tenth part of all his substance ; a vow which it was altogether to Moses' purpose to record, since it virtually bound Jacob's posterity to render that tribute of tithes, which the law constituted the revenue for the support of the national priesthood and worship. †

The next passage relates the arrival of Jacob in Padan-Aram, and his marriages to Leah and Rachel,

* Gen. xxviii. 1-5.

† xxviii. 10-22.

the former having been imposed upon him, by their father, in the latter's place, and each of them being represented by the narrative to be bought by a service of seven years.* Then follow accounts of the birth of Jacob's twelve children, viz. eleven sons and one daughter (the youngest son, Benjamin, being born afterwards in Palestine);† and of the arrangement made between Laban and Jacob, for the compensation of the latter as the superintendent of his father-in-law's herds and flocks, an arrangement which, by the artifices of

* Gen. xxix. 1-30. Commentators, who think themselves called upon to defend the circumstantial credibility of these narratives, have proposed to understand the stipulated years of service to have taken place *after* Jacob's marriages; and this they have been the more anxious to do, because, independently of the romantic character of such a persevering and onerous suit,—so inconsistent, besides, with the habits of the age,—Jacob, at the time of his arrival in Padan-Aram, was already, according to the received computation, seventy-seven years of age, and can hardly be supposed to have been willing to engage for the disposal of so much time before his nuptials. But I think, that the view proposed is irreconcilable with the language of the narrative; see verses 20, 21, 27, 28. — “Leah was *tender-eyed*” (17); rather, her eyes were *weak* or *dull*.

† xxix. 31-xxx. 24. Reuben (xxix. 32) signifies, *see, a son*. “The Lord *hath heard*,” &c. (33); Simeon is derived from שָׁמַע, *he heard*. “Now will my husband be *joined* unto me” (34); Levi is from לָוִי, *he was joined*. “Now will I *praise* the Lord” (35); Judah is from הוֹדָה, *he praised*. “God hath *judged* me” (xxx. 6); Dan is from דָּן, *he judged*. “With great *wrestlings*” (8); Naphtali is from נָתַל, *he wrestled*. “A *troop cometh*” (11); Gad is from גָּד, which expresses this idea. “*Happy* am I” (13); אָשֶׁר [Asher] means *blessedness*. “God hath given me mine *hire*” (18); Issachar is from שָׂכַר, *he hired*. “God hath *endowed* me,” “now will my husband *dwell* with me” (20); Zebulun is from נָחַל, *he dwelt*, which resembles נָחַל, *he endowed*. Dinah (21) is from the same root with Dan. “The Lord shall add to me” (24); Joseph is from יָסַף, *he added*. — In xxx. 1, we find a hint of the evil consequences likely to result from the kind of marriage forbidden in Lev. xviii. 18. — The stipulation of Rachel, in xxx. 15, connects itself with the precept in the latter part of Ex. xxi. 10, showing the obligation there referred to, to have had a foundation in ancient usage.

Jacob, became to him a source of great wealth.* In this instance, as before in the transaction by which Esau was deprived of his birth-right, the character of Jacob appears merely treacherous and despicable. Had Moses presented it as in any respect worthy of praise or imitation, his character as a moralist would have been deservedly impeached. But it is only through a false method of criticism, that he has been supposed to have done any thing of this kind. He has related an actual course of events, as the ancient authorities had made those events known to him. The record was important to those for whom he was writing, as it explained the rise of the fortunes of the common ancestor of all their tribes.

A natural dissatisfaction growing up, on the part of Laban, at seeing his property, he knew not how, passing over into the possession of his steward, Jacob is said to have resolved, under the divine direction, to take his family and his substance, and without communicating his design to Laban, lest obstructions should be offered, to return into his native country. Laban followed and overtook him ; and, after an angry parley, which terminated in a reconciliation and a friendly parting, each pursued his way to his own home. What the object of Rachel could have been in purloining her father's idolatrous images, supposing the anecdote to be founded on fact, we can now only conjecture. Perhaps she had not herself been reclaimed from the idolatry in which she had been educated, and desired to take along with her the protection of her family deities ; perhaps it was the worth of the costly materials of the images, which attracted her ; perhaps she thought, that, if left behind, her father might consult them, and learn

* Gen. xxx. 25 - 43.

by what route to pursue the fugitives, when their flight was known. — The parting feast of Laban and Jacob was important to be recorded by Moses, as showing the antiquity of the practice of those Feast Offerings, which had so prominent a place in the ritual of that law which he promulgated.*

Jacob, on his approach to the confines of Palestine, is represented to have been met and welcomed by *angels of God*; by which phrase it is not unlikely, that the original writer meant to indicate celestial visitants,† though, on the other hand, it would be doing no violence to his language to understand him as speaking of friendly messengers, perhaps from Isaac, perhaps from Esau, perhaps from the neighbouring inhabitants, who greeted his return to his own country. The word rendered *angels* is the same with that used in the second following verse, of the messengers whom Jacob is said to have sent to Esau; and they might well be called *angels of God*, in the sense, that Jacob acknowledged a token of the divine goodness in their arriving to encourage him at this anxious time, or because they welcomed him into a country which was God's own land. — The displeasure of his brother, which he had so grievously provoked, could not fail to be to Jacob, at this period, a most serious occasion of solicitude. We are accordingly told, that he sent forward a message of respect and conciliation, and that, hearing that his brother was approaching with a large attendance, he divided

* Gen. xxxi. 1–55. It may have been interesting to the Jews of Moses' time to observe the coincidences between the circumstances of their own flight from Egypt, and that of their ancestor from Mesopotamia. — xxxi. 35, connects itself with Lev. xv. 19 *et seq.*, as showing that directions given in the latter passage had a foundation in ancient usage. Rachel, se menstruum esse simulando, facile patrem a se arcuit. — With xxxi. 54, comp. Lev. iii.; and see Vol. I. pp. 245, 246.

† Comp. xxviii. 12 *et seq.*

his caravan into two parts, in the hope that, if one should be seized upon by Esau, the other might escape. His timid and self-accusing mind forboded worse than happened. The more generous spirit of Esau had already forgiven the foul wrong which he had endured, and he greeted his offending relative with a cordiality which even went so far as to refuse his gifts, though at last he consented to receive them, to content the giver's mind. He proposed no interference with Jacob, but promptly returned to his own home in Mount Seir, to the south of Palestine, desisting from the purpose (which his friendliness had dictated) of accompanying Jacob as far as their road was the same, when he found that his brother's apprehensive and suspicious temper saw in the proposal only the disguise of some treacherous design.*

The incident related, in this connexion, of Jacob's wrestling with a man through a night, derives its importance from its being an account which tradition had preserved of the occasion of his adoption of the name *Israel*. It may be thought probable, that, in its original state, this account was the relation of a dream, which caused Jacob to assume the name. Dreams, as every one may have experienced, frequently take their form from some physical affection of the time. Such may have been the case in the present instance, in respect

* Gen. xxxii. 1-23; xxxiii. 1-16. Here was a second instance (comp. Gen. xii. 10. — xiii. 4) of the rightful owner of the Holy Land returning to reclaim it, after an absence of considerable duration. Both served as precedents for the course which the Israelites were now taking, under Moses, to repossess their ancient domains. — The word "Mahana-im" (xxxii. 2, comp. Josh. xiii. 26) means *two camps*, and was probably intended to contain a reference to the two parties; one, that of Jacob and his company; the other, of the angels. — From the statement in xxxii. 3, it followed, that Jacob, on his return to Palestine, did not find his brother there to contest his sole occupation of that territory. Esau had already voluntarily established himself in Mount Seir.

to one particular recorded. Jacob, suffering from a lameness, the pain of which followed him in his sleep, dreamed of a dislocation of his limb in wrestling. The fact was handed down; and at length, in a way altogether consonant with the growth of many superstitious practices, his descendants preserved the memory of the occurrence, by forbearing to eat the corresponding part of animals slaughtered for food. Or perhaps it is as likely, that the practice, actually originating in some other cause, had at length, after the account of the wrestling of Jacob had been transmitted through several generations, come to be erroneously supposed to have had its origin in that event, agreeably to the statement which Moses had received, and which he has preserved in the last verse of the thirty-second chapter. *

Of the meeting of Jacob with his parents, an event of which it would interest us so highly to read, we are told nothing in detail; nor any thing whatever, except at a later period, and in connexion with the death of Isaac.† We are informed, that Jacob reëstablished himself in his own country, building booths, pitching his tent, buying land, and erecting an altar, in different places.‡ The murderous assault by Levi and Simeon upon a Canaanitish settlement, the inhabitants of which they had perfidiously brought into a condition admitting of their being attacked with impunity, is next related; by no means in the way of commendation of the conduct of Jacob's sons, which, on the contrary, he is represented, in the context, and again at the close of the book, as severely rebuking; but partly because it was an important independent fact, touching the relation,

* Gen. xxxii. 24 - 32. There is no allusion in any other part of the Old Testament to the practice mentioned in verse 32.

† xxxv. 27.

‡ xxxiii. 17 - 20.

which, from the first, the family of Jacob had sustained towards the Canaanites, and further, because it was an intimation to the contemporaries of Moses, that what the law required them to do, in refusing to be allied with the Canaanitish race, was no more than what their ancestors had done from the beginning. No motive must weigh with them to intermarry with the Canaanites. The strongest inducements to permit such contracts had proved unavailing with their fathers. The sister of Levi and Simeon had been dishonored. But they reckoned it no removal, but only an aggravation, of the disgrace, that she should be given to a Canaanitish husband. The richest bribes had been offered on the part of the husband's friends; but all in vain. The presumption, on the part of a Canaanite, of seeking a daughter of Israel, they had considered worthy to be avenged, even by a cruel and perfidious massacre.* The passage had a similar importance in another respect; viz. as it testified, that, in the time of Jacob, the rite of circumcision had been regarded as obligatory by his family.†

In the thirty-fifth chapter we read of Jacob's consecrating Bethel, the place where Jehovah had appeared to him on his departure into Mesopotamia, by erecting there an altar, when he had caused all his family to give up whatever instruments of idolatry remained by them; ‡ of the death and burial of Rebekah's nurse, a

* Gen. xxxiv. 1-31.

† xxxiv. 13-17.

‡ xxxv. 1-7. "Put away the strange gods that are among you" (2); comp. xxxi. 34. — "Be clean, and change your garments" (2); here is the first mention of methods of lustration, as having been anciently in use with a religious purpose, which were prescribed in various instances by the Law; comp. Ex. xxix. 4, 5; xl. 12, 13; Lev. xiv. 8; xvi. 4, 24. — "Their earrings, which were in their ears" (4); these were probably worn by idolaters, as amulets. — With xxxv. 6, comp. xxviii. 16, 17.

circumstance which deserved to be mentioned as giving to Jacob's descendants a further claim to a spot appropriated by him to such an important use;* of a renewal of the promise to Jacob, that his posterity should possess the country, along with a different account of his taking the name Israel (the former statement declaring, that he adopted it at Peniel, the latter, at Bethel);† of the death of Rachel in giving birth to Benjamin, and her burial at Bethlehem, marking another spot of the country sacred to the family of Jacob;‡ of an offence of Reuben against his father, which, as we shall read, led to a forfeiture of his birth-right;§ of the names of Jacob's family, the list being a repetition of part of a previous passage (from which, however, it differs in omitting etymologies, and other particulars);|| of a visit of Jacob to Isaac, at Mamre, his ancient residence, as well as Abraham's;¶ and, finally, of the death of Isaac at the age of a hundred and eighty years.**

In the preceding remarks, I have represented Moses

* Gen. xxxv. 8. "Allon-bachuth" means *the oak of weeping*.

† xxxv. 9-15; comp. xxxii. 28-30. — "He poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon" (14); here is a reference to practices afterwards prescribed by the Law; see Vol. I. p. 242.

‡ xxxv. 16-20. — "Thou shalt have this son also" (17); rather, "this child also shall be a *son* for thee"; that is, the encouragement offered to Rachel was, that the hope would be fulfilled which she had expressed in xxx. 24. — Benoni (18) means, *son of my sorrow*, and Benjamin, *son of the right hand*, i. e. *of strength*. Some, however, prefer to read the latter name, with the Samaritan, "Benjaminim," in which case it signifies, *son of days*, agreeably to what Judah calls Benjamin in xlv. 20.

§ xxxv. 21, 22. — "Israel spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar" (2); here, then, was another tract of which Israel had taken special possession.

|| xxxv. 23-26; comp. xxix. 31 — xxx. 24. The insertion of the name of Benjamin (24) in a list of children born to Jacob in Padan Aram (26) is a contradiction of the narrative immediately preceding (16-19).

¶ xxxv. 27; comp. xiii. 18, xxv. 9.

** xxxv. 28, 29.

as repeatedly encouraging his followers to the invasion of the territory of Canaan, by laying before them historical evidence, that it had been promised by Jehovah to their ancestors, and that those ancestors had taken possession of it by actual settlement.* This latter point requires some elucidation. In relation to it, two questions naturally present themselves; 1. Did the ancestors of the Israelites establish a right to the territory by exploration and settlement? and, if so, then 2. Was not that right abandoned by their subsequent desertion of the country during their residence in Egypt?

As to the first question, no fact, I think, can be referred to, inconsistent with the supposition of what Moses appears to intend to urge, namely, that Abraham and his family were the first permanent occupants of the country of Canaan. In the account, however, of Abraham's emigration, we read, that "the Canaanite was then [or, *already*] in the land."†

According to my understanding of this statement, so far from impairing, it was designed to strengthen, the argument which I suppose Moses to have used. It is as if he had said, "Though Canaanites were already in some sense, in the country, they were not there, as the facts show, in any such manner as to prevent, or even to offer any opposition to, its peaceable occupation by Abraham; and, therefore, at this day, when we demand a restitution of it to the rightful owners, it is out of

* The ground, that Palestine properly so called, and that alone (excluding the country east of the Jordan), belonged to the Israelites as an *inheritance*, — a property transmitted from their ancestors, — is one which Moses very expressly takes. It is the basis of the direction given by him (Deut. ii. 9, 19) to offer no molestation to the Moabites and Ammonites, who inhabited the country east of the river, and of the question which was raised (Numb. xxxii.) upon the propriety of allowing a portion of the people to settle in that country, when, by the fortune of a war provoked by its inhabitants, it had unexpectedly fallen into their hands.

† Gen. xii. 6; xiii. 7.

the question for them to set up a claim of prior settlement."

The truth probably was, that the Canaanites (or Phenicians), in the pursuit of their customary business, had established scattered trading-posts, or, as at this day they would be called, *factories*, in the territory in question, without any intention, in the first instance, of making it their home; and that, so far from being annoyed to see it in a course of settlement by other foreigners, they regarded its settlement with satisfaction as favoring their plans of traffic. From their earliest appearance in history, they are known as a commercial community, not as a community of agriculturists, or of herdsmen. Canaan was not their original seat. Herodotus, writing long after they obtained temporary possession of it, and speaking of a time, when, after the Israelitish conquests, they still retained their hold of a belt of territory along the seashore, says; "The Phenicians, say the Persian historians, came from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and fixed themselves in the country which they still inhabit, beginning at the same time to make foreign voyages";* and again; "The Phenicians, as they say themselves, had formerly dwelt on the Red Sea, and from thence removed into Syria, where they occupied the sea-coast."† Considering their earlier position, and their habits of life, it is reasonable to suppose, that their connexion with the territory afterwards called by their name began in the way which has been suggested. If trading-posts were all which they intended to establish in the country, such establishments, no one would pretend, gave them a right to dominion over its soil. That they did not themselves lay claim to any such

* Lib. i. § 1.

† Lib. vii. § 89.

jurisdiction, the whole history implies, when it represents Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as ranging freely over the open country, appropriating it to themselves by durable monuments, and dividing and assigning it at their own discretion. If the patriarchs, by purchasing of the Canaanites some single spots, implied that to these they had a previous title, this fact does not contradict the view I am maintaining; for these spots may have been, and in some instances appear to have been,* mere appurtenances to some insulated post. Such a post, — and not a “city,” in any modern acceptance of the term, — must that have been, of which Simeon and Levi, even supposing them to have been aided by some portion of their father’s household, slew in one day all the males, and carried away the spoil;† and such posts must the “cities that were round about” have been, which this violent act affected with such a terror, that “they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.”‡

Till after the time of the patriarchs, these trading foreigners entertained no design of forming permanent settlements in the country. As yet it belonged to the families of Abraham and Isaac (and, by their disposal, to one branch only of their families), by undisputed right. After the departure of Jacob and his sons into Egypt, the Canaanites extended themselves, and took possession of the domain temporarily abandoned by its owners; so that, when the Israelites were ready, under Moses, to reclaim their patrimony, a numerous population of interlopers was prepared to contest the claim. And this brings us to the second question proposed. Supposing the Israelitish race to have been once right-

* Gen. xxiii. 16 – 18.

† xxxiv. 25 – 29.

‡ xxxv. 5.

ful possessors of Canaan, had their right been relinquished through their long absence?

We cannot maintain, that it had been thus relinquished, unless we are prepared to show, — which certainly we are not, — that the Israelites had taken no measures, meanwhile, to guard against an inference liable to be drawn from their temporary desertion of their home, and to make known to all concerned, that they did not intend their existing condition to operate as a prejudice to their right, or as a hindrance of their assertion of it, whenever circumstances should permit. A proprietor does not cease to be a proprietor, because he does not live upon his land. If the Israelites, while in Egypt, had, year by year, sent heralds into Canaan, to proclaim, in its places of resort, that the country was theirs, and that they meant, in good time, to return to it, no one would hesitate to say, that they did all that was necessary to keep their claim alive, and foreclose a new claim from any other quarter. That they did not, in fact, give, from time to time, such public notice of perseverance in their claim, as the customs of the age required (whatever that might be), is a supposition essential to the view of their right having been lost; yet it is one for which it would be impossible to produce the slightest authority. And, on the contrary, from the very little which is told us, of transactions during the absence of the chosen family from Palestine, we gather a few particulars, showing that they still, in their exile, continued to revisit it, and did acts in it sufficiently significant, to observers, of their continuing to regard it as their home. When Jacob died, his remains were conveyed from Egypt, with a pompous attendance, to the family sepulchre in Canaan; and it is expressly recorded, that the ceremony was one of such parade, as to attract the attention of the neighbouring

inhabitants.* From a relation in the first book of Chronicles, — and that introduced so incidentally, as to make it probable that there were other incidents of the same kind, — we learn, that the Israelites, during their residence in Egypt, visited Palestine for the purpose of pasturing their cattle, and even, apparently, of erecting cities.† Nor would any one even be justified in affirming, that, between the time of Joseph and that of Moses, the Israelites had not actually made unsuccessful attempts for the permanent recovery of their former seats. That they themselves intended from the first to return to Palestine, is evident, as well from the circumstances under which they left it, as from particular intimations to that effect;‡ and, entertaining this design, it is to be presumed, that they would guard against any obstacle in the way of its accomplishment, by taking care to do whatever was fit to keep the knowledge of their title alive.

It may be said, that, allowing the view which has been taken to be correct, it only proves, that the Jews of Moses' time had an inherited right to the open country of Palestine; it does not justify them for expelling the Canaanites from those scattered cities, to which, on its own showing, the Canaanites had the same right that the Jews had to the rest of the country. To this it is obvious to reply, that, in point of fact, no such question of divided right could possibly be presented. The Canaanites, who, in Moses' time, had occupied the country, could have no thought except of maintaining the whole, or resigning the whole. When they undertook to hold, against the Israelites, terri-

* Gen. i. 11 – 13.

† 1 Chron. vii. 20 – 24.

‡ Gen. xlv. 4; xlvii. 29; xlviii. 21; xlix. 13, 29 – 32; i. 24 (comp. Ex. xiii. 19); Ex. i. 10.

tory to which the Israelites had a rightful claim, it was incident to their failure in that attempt, that they should lose what, had they asserted no more than their right, might have been amicably accorded to them. Their encroachment upon property not theirs, made it necessary that that property should be forcibly recovered by its rightful possessors. In provoking a war, they submitted whatever was theirs to the fortune of war; and, if they were beaten, it passed into the hands of their adversary by the right of conquest. Further, in recovering their patrimony, the Jews were justified, by the law of self-preservation, in doing whatever might be necessary to assure a permanent and peaceable possession of it. And this, under existing circumstances, required the expulsion of the Canaanites from their borders. It was impossible for the Jewish state, as now constituted, to live securely, while harbouring idolatrous and grossly immoral communities within its bosom.

The argument, which I have urged, if admitted to be just, goes the whole length of showing, that, by-right of prior occupation, a right never waved, the Israelites were entitled to repossess the country of Palestine, and the Canaanites were bound to surrender it to them without resistance. Let the argument have such weight as it may be thought to merit. At this distance of time, it must be owned, that we are not sufficiently acquainted with some important facts connected with the question, to urge it with perfect confidence. But it will not escape a careful reader, that, in order to justify the course prescribed by Moses to the Israelites, in this instance, it is not necessary to go nearly so far as this argument, if well founded, would carry us. The plea of prior occupation, if sustained, would do the double office of establishing the right of the Israel-

ites, and imposing an obligation on the tribes of Canaan. But for an interpreter, who undertakes to vindicate the course of Moses, it would be altogether a work of supererogation to attempt to show, that he used an argument designed to satisfy the Canaanites, that it was their duty to abandon their homes. Such an argument to the Canaanites would not have been pertinent to any of his objects. He had no mission to that people; and no nation, in any age, — least of all, in those barbarous times, — is likely to be persuaded, that it ought to abandon its home, because another nation has a better right to it. The mission of Moses was to the Jews; and to them it was certainly in the highest degree pertinent for him to say; “Reclaim and recover this country of Canaan, not only because Jehovah, the proprietor and rightful disposer of the earth and all that is therein, gave it to your fathers for the permanent dwelling of themselves and their race, but because your fathers in past times took possession of it, and neither they nor their posterity have ever done any thing which can be properly regarded as an alienation of it.” And, even independently of the view that these hints of Moses were intended to show, that a claim on the ground of first occupation had been originally well founded, and had since been properly kept up, they had still an important use in exciting the Israelites to the vigorous assertion of a right, which, on another and unquestionable ground, they knew themselves to possess. Whether or not they had other good titles to the territory of Canaan, they knew themselves to have that which was best of all, and which was sufficient alone to vindicate to their own minds their enterprise of invading that region, though other nations, ignorant of Jehovah, would not admit its validity. Jehovah, who made, and had the supreme right to dispose of all things,

had given that territory to their fathers and to them. So testified old tradition, and so Moses, in the exercise of his supernatural office, declared. As to right, here was enough. As to impulse to assert that right, nothing could more appropriately furnish it, than to call up the remembrance, that the territory, which they were seeking to repossess, now profaned by idolatry and all sorts of crime, contained their fathers' ancient homes, their altars, and their graves.



LECTURE XXV.

THE TIME OF JACOB AND OF THE RESIDENCE
IN EGYPT.

GENESIS XXXVI. 1. — EXODUS II. 10.

GENEALOGY OF THE IDUMEANS.—CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE BIRTH OF PHAREZ AND ZERAH.—HISTORY OF JOSEPH.—MIGRATION OF JACOB WITH HIS FAMILY TO EGYPT.—CONDUCT OF JACOB IN RESPECT TO JOSEPH'S TWO SONS.—LAST DISCOURSE OF JACOB TO HIS CHILDREN, AND REASONS FOR ITS PRESERVATION BY MOSES.—BURIAL OF JACOB IN CANAAN.—JOSEPH'S SUBSEQUENT TREATMENT OF HIS BROTHERS.—HIS DEATH IN EGYPT, AFTER COMMANDING THAT HIS BODY SHOULD BE CONVEYED TO CANAAN.—SUBSEQUENT CONDITION OF THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT.—BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF MOSES.—CREDIBILITY OF THE RECORDS RELATING TO THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.—REFERENCES IN THE LATER BOOKS OF THE PENTATEUCH TO DIVINE REVELATIONS MADE TO THEM.—CHRONOLOGY OF EARLY EVENTS IN THE BIBLICAL HISTORY.—SUPPOSED LONGEVITY OF MEN IN THE EARLY AGES.

THE thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis interrupts the narrative of the fortunes of Jacob and his family with a brief account of the posterity of Esau, which was of interest to the Israelites, both because of the consanguinity of the two races, and of the near vicinity of the territories which they occupied. In this chapter we have further indications of the fragmentary character of the book, as it has been heretofore described. Different parts of it present repetitions of the same fact,* and it contains statements inconsistent

* Compare Gen. xxxvi. 10 with 4; 18 with 5 and 14; 29, 30, with 31, 32.

with others made in the context, and in previous parts of the book.*

With the thirty-seventh chapter begins the history of Joseph, the eleventh son of Jacob, which, with that of its influence on the fortunes of the family, is pursued to the close of the book, the continuity of the narrative being interrupted only by the contents of

* In Gen. xxxvi. 2, the name *Anah* is said to have belonged to a daughter of Zibeon, while in 24 (compare 29) it is given to his son, and in 20 it seems to be given to his brother. — In xxvi. 34, Esau's wives are said to have been "Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite"; and in xxviii. 9, he is said to have also married "Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth"; while in xxxvi. 2, 3, the same names of his wives are partly retained, with a different account of their parentage. It is there Adah, instead of Bashemath, who is daughter of Elon, and Bashemath, on the other hand, instead of Mahalath, is represented as daughter of Ishmael. It seems impossible here not to recognise different traditions respecting the same fact, which had come to Moses' knowledge. — In 6-8 is a record, important to the Jews of Moses' time, of the voluntary abdication of Canaan by Esau and his family. — In 20-30 is an account of the tribes which had occupied Idumea previously to its conquest by Esau (compare Deut. ii. 12, 22). It is the more pertinent in the place, as Esau and his son Eliphaz (Gen. xxxvi. 24, 25, 12, 22) had married daughters of the Horite race. — Instead of "mules" (24) the Vulgate translates "hot baths," which is a more probable rendering. — "These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel" (31). From this verse it has been inferred, that the passage which it introduces was written after the establishment of the Israelitish monarchy. If so, one cannot reason from it against the authenticity of Genesis; it would only have to be regarded as one of those interpolations which doubtless exist. But I conceive that the idea, that this was written simply in reference to xxxv. 11, is by no means destitute of probability; the writer meaning to indicate, that there had been so many princes in the family of Esau, while as yet the divine promise to Israel, respecting a royal posterity, remained unfulfilled. And this is the more likely, as, while the death of the princes previously named is mentioned, there is no such record (xxxvi. 39) in respect to Hadar, who, considering the number of names in the line, may well have been the king of Edom to whom Moses (comp. Numb. xx. 14,) is related to have sent a message. The passage, if interpolated, was perhaps taken from 1 Chron. i. 43-50.

one chapter, the thirty-eighth, in which is related an incident in the life of one of his brothers. Judah, having neglected to take care for the marriage of his youngest son Shelah to Tamar, widow of Shelah's elder brothers, is made the subject of an artifice on her part, in the sequel of which he becomes the parent of twin sons. The passage, I conceive, was esteemed by Moses worthy of preservation, chiefly because of its sustaining, by the force of ancient authority, two provisions of his law, those relating to levirate marriages, and to the punishment of the crime of adultery.*

The history of Joseph, independently of its being one of the most touching narratives within the compass of all literature, sacred or profane, was indispensable to the objects of Moses' record, inasmuch as it connected itself throughout with the occasion of the

* With Gen. xxxviii. 11, 14, &c. compare Deut. xxv. 5, 6; and with xxxviii. 24, compare Deut. xxii. 22-24. — "At that time," &c. (1). It is impossible to suppose a correct chronology here. When Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was seventeen years old (xxxvii. 2); when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream, he was thirty (xli. 46); that is, thirteen years had passed. To these succeeded the seven years of plenty (xli. 53), and to them two years of famine (xlv. 6), making in all twenty-two years after the abduction of Joseph; by no means time enough for Judah to have become the parent of two sons, who were successively the husband of a woman, by whom, subsequently, Judah himself had a son, who, in his turn, had already (xlvi. 12) become a parent. — The reason, probably, why the second son of Judah was unwilling (xxxviii. 9) to become the parent of a child, who, according to an arrangement of the Mosaic Law (existing, however, it appears, as early as the patriarchal times), would be reckoned not as his, but as the child of his elder brother deceased, was this; that that child, as the representative of Jacob's oldest son (Deut. xxv. 5, 6), would be entitled to a double portion of the family estate (Deut. xxi. 17); whereas, if the elder line were extinct, not only in fact, as was the case with that of Er, but also in legal contemplation, its rights would vest in the second son and his heirs. — The passage, 27-30, was probably of importance in relation to a rule, resting on ancient usage, for deciding the question, which, of twins, was to be esteemed entitled to the prerogatives of first born.

transfer of the Israelites from the territory, which, under divine guidance, they had anciently occupied, to that from which he was now conducting them, to reclaim their former possessions; while it was also, in some particulars, available for the purpose of lending authority to provisions of his law. It would be useless to recite it here. The accounts of the envy, excited against Joseph in the minds of his brothers by their father's partial affection, and of his being sold by them as a slave into a foreign country; * of the circumstances under which he was there committed to prison; † of his interpretation of dreams of great officers of Pharaoh, verified by the event; ‡ of his interpretation of dreams of Pharaoh himself, relating to approaching periods of abundance and famine; § of his promotion to the highest station under that prince, and marriage to the daughter of one of his courtiers; || of his administration of the trust of collecting stores during the season of plenty, and distributing them during that of scarcity, which followed; ¶ of his interview with his brothers, who had come to Egypt to obtain supplies in the famine, which had extended itself to

* Gen. xxxvii. 1-36. — "Thy mother" (10); but we have before read of the death of Rachel (xxxv. 19). — Verses 12, 14, and 17 bear upon the subject of the extent of Jacob's possessions in Canaan. — "All his daughters" (35); but we know of no daughter of Jacob except Dinah (xxx. 21).

† xxxix. 1-23.

‡ xl. 1-23.

§ xli. 1-37. — "Take up the fifth part" (34); that is, either, obtain it by purchase, or (as some commentators would have it), instead of demanding a tithe of the produce, which may have been a customary royal revenue (compare 1 Sam. viii. 15, 17), exact double that amount.

|| xli. 38-46. — "Bow the knee" (43). The meaning of the word thus rendered, is matter of dispute among the philologists. Some understand by it, *the man clothed by the king*. The name *Zaphnath-paaneah* (45), given by Pharaoh to Joseph, is also differently interpreted, as signifying *the revealer of secrets*, and *the saviour of the land*.

¶ xli. 47-57.

their country, his liberal provision for them, and the method adopted by him to procure the presence of his own mother's son, Benjamin, who had been left behind;* of their return, accompanied by Benjamin;† of his artifice for their detention,‡ and disclosure of himself to them;§ of his sending for his father,|| and the arrival and establishment of Jacob and all his family in Egypt;¶ and of the method by which he made

* Gen. xlii. 1-38. — "They laded their asses," &c. (26, 27, compare xliii. 2); the whole account of a few asses' loads of corn being sent for to sustain a large establishment, like that of Jacob, and that, too, over a desert country, in the journey over which a great part of it must have been consumed, cannot fail to strike a careful reader as inconsistent with the supposition of circumstantial accuracy in the narrative.

† xliii. 1-34. — "The men marvelled one at another" (33); they were surprised, that any one in Egypt should know how to arrange them, as, under Joseph's direction, they had been arranged, in the order of their ages.

‡ xlv. 1-34. — The proceeding, related in 2 (compare 17), appears to have been adopted by Joseph with a view to ascertain, whether the hostility, with which he had been pursued by his elder brothers, was extended, since his departure, to the other son of Jacob's favorite wife. The conduct of Judah (33) gives him satisfaction on this point.

§ xlv. 1-8.

|| xlv. 9-28.

¶ xlv. 1 — xlvii. 12. — "Israel offered sacrifices" &c. (xlv. 1); designing thus to testify his purpose of continued allegiance to Jehovah, whose peculiar territory he was leaving. — "I will also surely bring thee up again" (4.); the simple fact of the possession, by the Jews, while in Egypt, of a tradition, that Jehovah had promised to Jacob to bring his family back to Palestine, proves their expectation of returning thither. — In verse 10 we have the name *Jemuel* corresponding to *Nemuel* in Numb. xxvi. 12, and *Zohar* corresponding to *Zerah*. In verse 13 *Job* corresponds to *Jashub* in Numb. xxvi. 24. *Ezbon* in 16 is *Ozni* in Numb. xxvi. 16. *Hushim* in 23 is *Shuham* in Numb. xxvi. 42; and there are several smaller discrepancies in the list. The catalogue of the sons of Benjamin in Genesis (xlv. 21) gives ten names, and that in Numbers (xxvi. 38-40), eight, four of which only (viz. Bela, Ashbel, Naaman, and Ard) are common to the two lists, unless *Huppim* (Gen. xlv. 21) be regarded as the same with *Hupham* (Numb. xxvi. 39); and further, Naaman and Ard, said in Genesis to be Benjamin's sons, are, in Numbers, called his grandsons. Such facts as these show the imperfect condition of the text of the Pentateuch. The subject of these genealogies will present itself again at the beginning of the first book of Chronicles. — "And

Pharaoh proprietor of the whole territory of the realm, and secured one fifth of its produce as a royal revenue; * — these accounts are sufficiently familiar to all readers of Scripture.

Serah their sister" &c. (17); why it is, that, contrary to custom, a *daughter* of Asher is here mentioned, I suppose there are no means of explaining; that it was not by mere accident, may be inferred from the fact, that her name is also introduced into the genealogy of her tribe in Numbers xxvi. 46. In 1 Chron. vii. 24, we find the same name, as belonging to a person who did a remarkable act. But there she is represented as of the tribe of Ephraim. — "All the souls that *came with* Jacob into Egypt" (26); Jacob himself, of course, is not included, nor Joseph with his sons. But they are expressly included in the next verse, making both enumerations correct. In making up the number thirty-three, in verse 15, it is necessary to understand Jacob himself as included, as well as Dinah, while Er and Onan are not taken into the enumeration, having died in Canaan. — "Ye shall say, 'Thy servants' trade' &c." (34). Joseph, wishing to guard against his family's becoming merged in the Egyptian race, directed them to announce themselves as devoted to an occupation, which, with the Egyptians, was in disrepute, to the end that a separate settlement might be assigned to them. — "In *the best* of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell" (xlvii. 6, compare 11); that is, say the commentators, the best for their uses as graziers; this would be different land from what would be best for agricultural uses, and which it is not to be supposed that Pharaoh would be willing to alienate from his own people. But it has been sufficiently seen, that I do not feel called upon, as a believer in the miraculous revelation through Moses, to defend the credibility of all the relations in this book.

* Gen. xlvii. 13–26. — In the relation in 20–26, I understand to be comprehended a virtual argument of Moses to the Israelites, to this effect; "Do not complain of the payment of tithes required by my law as a burdensome tribute. The king and proprietor of Egypt, while he exacts nothing from his priesthood, demands one fifth of the produce of the soil for his revenue. Your king, Jehovah, is equally the proprietor of the territory where he is about to establish you (compare Lev. xxv. 23); and he, too, demands nothing from those who serve at his altars. But to you, who are his tenants, he is more lenient, than is the prince, from whose sway you have just been released. He claims from you only one half of the revenue, which you know to be paid to Pharaoh by his subjects." Whether or not the true account of the origin of this Egyptian tax had come down to the time of the Exodus, the fact of its existence at that period is a necessary inference from the narrative, by whoever believes the composition, into which it is now incorporated, to be from the hand of Moses. The fact of the exemption of the priests of

At the end of seventeen years after the migration into Egypt, Jacob, perceiving his end to be approaching, sent for Joseph to give him his dying blessing, and obtained from him a promise to bury him in his own land of Canaan. The record represents him as proceeding, in the interview which followed, to show his peculiar affection for Joseph, by adopting Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, as his own, thereby elevating them to an equality, in respect to station and inheritance, with Reuben, Judah, and his other children. At the same time Jacob is said to have given to Ephraim, though the younger of the two, precedence above his brother.* The narrative, transmitted to Moses' time, which thus placed Ephraim and Manasseh, grandsons of Israel, on an equal footing with his sons, at the same time assigning to the former the superiority, justified the arrangement by which the number of twelve tribes was still kept entire, when, in Moses' time, the family of Levi was separated for sacred duties. And it authorized the precedence to which the tribe of Ephraim actually laid claim, as the chief representative of Joseph; a claim urged as well, per-

Egypt from taxation is also asserted by Diodorus Siculus (lib. i. § 73); comp. Herodotus (lib. ii. § 37).

* Gen. xlvii. 27 — xlviii. 22. — "I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt bury me in their burying-place" (xlvii. 30); a desire which Jacob cannot be supposed to have entertained, unless he expected his descendants to repossess the country; the passage, accordingly, gives rise to a remark similar to that which I made above on xlv. 4; see also xlviii. 21. — "Thy issue" &c. (xlviii. 6); that is, the posterity of all thy children hereafter born, should there be such, shall be reckoned as belonging to one or the other of the two races of Ephraim and Manasseh. — "Rachel died by me" &c. (7); Jacob seems here to refer to Rachel, his favorite wife, by way of explanation of the partiality which he was now manifesting to Joseph, her oldest son. — "I have given to thee one portion," &c. (22); what territory it was, here bequeathed to the children of Joseph, which Jacob had conquered from the Amorites, the history does not inform us.

haps, on other grounds with which we are not acquainted, as on those of its superior numbers,* and of its being the tribe of the military leader of the nation.

I object altogether to the usual method of commenting upon the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, which proceeds upon the postulate, that the words therein ascribed to Jacob are to be understood as prophetically indicating the fortunes of the respective tribes of his descendants in distant future times.† There is neither antecedent probability in its favor, nor is it justified by the contents of his discourse to his children assembled around his death-bed. On the other hand, I cannot perceive that the passage affords the smallest support to the opinion of those, who urge, that it so well describes events posterior to the time of Moses as well as to that of Jacob, as to justify its being ascribed to a period later than that commonly assigned for the composition of the Pentateuch. I cannot allow, that it furnishes any argument, to prove either Jacob to have been supernaturally informed respecting the future, or the compiler of the book of Genesis to have lived later than the time of Moses. I understand Jacob to

* Numb. i. 32-35. At the end of the journey through the wilderness, however, this condition had been reversed, supposing the text, in Numb. xxvi. 34-37, to be correct.

† Jacob indeed is represented (Gen. xlix. 1,) as having said to his sons; "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you *in the last days*." But this text is far from being a warrant for the common opinion of the character of the passage. The phrase, *the last days*, is quite as indefinite as the word *hereafter*; on the showing of the text itself, it was not the future fortunes of their posterity, but their own, "what shall befall *you*," that he proposed to speak to them of; and, though he very properly premised, that he meant to tell them what was to come, since much of what he said, describing either what their characters would bring upon them, or the arrangements which he had made in their behalf, fell under this description, still it is impossible for any one, whether adopting my view, or that which is current, to maintain, that the whole discourse related to things future; see xlix. 21.

be here represented as addressing himself to each of his sons, with topics, such as the circumstances or the feeling of the time might dictate. To one he recalls the remembrance of some important incident of his past life; to another, he makes a remark founded on his personal character; to one, he expresses his displeasure or approbation; to others, — dying in the belief, that his family would speedily, and as soon as circumstances should permit, return to their home in Canaan, — he specifies the district in that territory, which he desired them and their descendants to occupy.* And if, in some instances, we are at a loss to explain his meaning, this is no more than we should expect under circumstances, calling for references so strictly personal.

A crime of Reuben, Jacob's oldest child, had exposed him to his father's severe displeasure. To this the patriarch now refers; and the great purport of his address to his guilty son is to degrade him from that place in the family, which, by right of birth, was his.

* From John iv. 5, it appears, that a tradition existed in our Saviour's time, that Jacob gave to Joseph the territory occupied by his descendants. When did he give it? Not, it is to be supposed, before Joseph left Canaan, for he was then but seventeen years of age. I think we here have an additional presumption, that the last discourse of Jacob, however mutilated in the course of time, and only partly preserved in writing, was understood to have been occupied, among other things, with a distribution of the family estate. If it be said, that my suggestion of Jacob's expecting the speedy return of his family, is inconsistent with Gen. xv. 13, the substance of which must be supposed to have been known to him, I reply; 1. that it can by no means be assumed as certain, that this narrative was in existence as early as Jacob's time; perhaps it did not assume its present shape till four hundred years had passed after the migration into Egypt; 2. that, if it was in Jacob's possession, his mind was quite as likely to be fixed on the statement in xv. 16, as on that in xv. 13, which appears contradictory to it. If "in the fourth generation" of Abraham's posterity, the family were to return to Canaan, as is the declaration of the former text, Jacob, of course, was looking for their speedy return, because his own grandchildren, then standing before him, constituted that fourth generation from Abraham.

"Thou shalt not excel;" thou shalt not be chief; the prerogatives of first-born I transfer from thee to one more worthy.*

Simeon and Levi, too, had brought on themselves their parent's disapprobation, by conspiring together in an act of brutal cruelty. I understand his declaration to them as expressing, first, his indignation at their crime, and, secondly, his desire, that their families should be separated from one another in their settlements in Canaan, so as not to afford opportunity for any more such atrocious plots. "I will scatter them in Israel;" it is my will, that they be made to live apart. But who can suppose, that Jacob is here speaking of the tribe of Levi, and that, at the same time, he was acquainted with the future designation of that tribe to the sacred office? †

Next to Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, Judah was Israel's oldest son. To him, therefore, after their disgrace, the dignity of first-born naturally descended. In him, also, it appears, that Israel discerned personal qualities, fitting him to be the head of the family in the important movement of returning to Canaan, which Jacob naturally supposed would not be long delayed after his own death. To Judah, accordingly, he assigns the chief conduct of that enterprise. "Well art thou called *Judah*," he says to him; "for *praise* from thy brethren is thy due. In thy valor they may well trust, and because of it they may well submit themselves to thy guidance. Accordingly, with Judah let the sceptre be, and around him let the people gather, till the en-

* Gen. xlix. 3, 4 (comp. xxxv. 22). — "Unstable as water;" rather, "Thou hast raged [thy passions have raged] like a turbulent stream;" or (as Geddes renders it), "Like water thou hast lapsed," i. e. glided from thy preeminence.

† 5-7; comp. xxxiv. 25-31.

terprise of return to our own country be accomplished; till the people have arrived at Shiloh, the centre of the Holy Land." The rest of the address to Judah I understand as consisting of a bequest, to him and his family, of the wine district of Palestine for the place of their settlement.*

In the few words spoken to Zebulun, I find nothing but a designation of the particular portion of Canaan, which Jacob, for reasons of which we know nothing,

* Gen. xlix. 8–12.—“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise” (8); a paronomasia, the name being derived from a verb which signifies *to praise*; (comp. xxix. 35.)—“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,” &c. (10). If these words contained such a prophecy of the Messiah as has been found in them by readers and commentators, nothing can be more remarkable than the fact, that it is nowhere referred to, in any part of the Bible. That they do contain it, I take to be one of the most gratuitous of all baseless imaginations. The word *Shiloh* has no conceivable application to the Messiah. It is the well-known name of a city near the centre of Palestine. The words rendered, in our version, “until Shiloh come,” I translate, “until one come to Shiloh,” i. e. (according to the well-known form of the Hebrew impersonal) until the arrival at Shiloh. Jacob pointed out to his children whom they should acknowledge as their leader, till their expedition to recover their patrimony had proved successful, the centre of their territory having been reached. The absence from the word שִׁלֹה of the final ה (technically called ה *local*), is no objection to this rendering. The very word here in question occurs in other places, without such addition, where *to Shiloh* is undoubtedly the meaning (comp. Joshua xviii. 1; Judges xxi. 12; 1 Sam. iv. 12; 1 Kings xiv. 2, 4); indeed, it has nowhere this appendage, nor could conveniently take it. Without any reference to such a view as I propose of the passage, שֹׁרֵק, rendered “a law-giver,” has been otherwise translated “the staff,” or “the standard.” The word signifies, any person or thing that controls or guides.—“Binding his foal unto the vine” &c. (11); that is, I destine for him that region, where grapes are so plenty, that men will not even refuse them to their beasts. It is true, that the tribe of Judah did subsequently occupy part of the wine region of Palestine. But this proves nothing, either of a supernatural character in the declarations ascribed to Jacob, or of a late composition of the passage. The standing of that tribe entitled it to a preference in the selection of its territory; and the very fact of this purpose of Jacob having been communicated to his sons, and transmitted by them to their posterity, may have influenced, in this instance, the appropriation of land in the time of Joshua. See Josh. xv.

proposed to make the patrimony of that branch of his family. His wish, thus expressed, transmitted through the later generations, and incorporated by Moses into his book of Genesis, appears to have been partly regarded in the subsequent distribution of the land at the time of the conquest by Joshua.* The border, however, of Zebulun, never extended to Zidon, which was included within the tribe of Asher;† a fact equally inconsistent with the prophetic character of the discourse here ascribed to Jacob, and with the supposition of its having been composed after the settlement and partition of Canaan by the Jews.

The address to Issachar I understand as a reference to the industrious and unwarlike character of that individual. Such were his dispositions, Jacob says, that it might be expected he would sit down quietly among his canals [*not* “burdens”]; that, attracted by the serene and cheerful enjoyments of a husbandman’s life, he would give his shoulder to labor, and toil unambitiously in the irrigation of his fields. ‡

The allusion which follows, to the character of Dan, borrows force from the contrast which it presents to that last remarked upon. Notwithstanding the superior birth of Issachar, who was the son of Jacob’s first-married wife, while Dan was but the offspring of her servant, the latter would manifest a character as vigorous

* Gen. xlix. 13; comp. Josh. xix. 10–16.

† Comp. Josh. xix. 28.

‡ Gen. xlix. 14, 15. — “Between two *burdens*” (14); for this rendering there is no good authority; instead of *canals*, Gesenius and others would translate the word *sheepfolds* (comp. Judges v. 16), which equally suits the general scope of the passage, as I have represented it. — “Became a servant unto tribute” (Gen. xlix. 15); the best commentators understand, by the word rendered *tribute*, a watering-pot, or machine for irrigating land; the Septuagint, apparently generalizing the expression, reads, “becometh a husbandman.”

and bold, as his brother's was gentle and unenterprising. He would truly be a *Dan*; a judge and ruler; he would assert all his privileges as the head of one branch of the race, and would be a terror to his enemies and theirs.*

Of Gad, it is said, in the form of a play upon his name, that he is a stubborn, persevering person; foiled and worsted he may be for a time, but at length he will overcome in his turn.†

The language, addressed to Asher, is so highly figurative, that I find myself unable to decide, whether it was intended to refer to his luxurious turn of mind, or to Jacob's purpose, that the settlement of the family should be in that region of Palestine best adapted to the culture of the olive.‡

The single sentence relating to Naphtali is, to us, still more vague, the translation itself being altogether unsettled. The construction, now most approved, gives the following sense; "Naphtali is a spreading terebinth, bearing beautiful branches." The allusion, if we adopt this rendering, would appear to have been to the comeliness of his family; but, viewed in this

* Gen. xlix. 16–18. — "*Dan shall judge*" (16); a paronomasia (comp. xxx. 6). — "An adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels," &c. (17); possibly these words contain the further intimation, that Jacob intended the settlement of the family of Dan to be "in the way" from Egypt and the Philistine cities, so as to defend the southern frontier of Canaan against inroads of their cavalry. — "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord" (18); I am doubtful, whether we are to understand these words (supposing them to be genuine) as an expression of Jacob's confident expectation, that, by a valor like that of Dan, of which he had just spoken, his posterity would always be kept safe [I confidently expect, O Lord, thy protection for my posterity], or whether they are to be taken for an utterance of the dying man, who interrupts, for a moment, the connexion of his discourse, with an exclamation having reference to his own condition [I am awaiting, O Lord, the release thou wilt soon bring me from these pains].

† 19; comp. xxx. 11.

‡ 20; comp. Deut. xxxiii. 24.

light, it is natural to suppose, that the passage has come down to us mutilated and incomplete.*

The affectionate heart of the father pours itself out in the blessing pronounced upon Joseph. "Behold! how prosperous," says Jacob, "is this my beloved son; even as flourishing as a stem, which, striking its roots into a fountain, spreads its branches far and wide.† He was reared in sorrow; he has felt the bitterness of persecution;‡ but nothing could permanently harm him under the protection of his heavenly friend,§ the God of his father, his own Almighty deliverer. And now, my son, may the same gracious Being shower on thee all blessings, which the heaven above, or the depths below, can send! May thine be the blessing of a fruitful race!¶ Upon the head of him, whom his

* Gen. xlix. 21. — The translation above given was obtained by Bochart, by changing the vowel punctuation of two words. It is sufficiently like that of the Septuagint version, which reads, "Naphtali is a luxuriant stem, giving beauty in branching." If any sense is to be put upon our received English translation, it is, I suppose, what would be represented in a paraphrase like the following; "Naphtali is wild and ungovernable, though specious and winning."

† 22.

‡ 23. This verse evidently refers to the treatment experienced by Joseph from his brothers.

§ 24. The words in this verse, "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel," I think it likely, were an interpolation of some zealot for the honor of the race of Joseph, who thereby intimated, that the Messiah was to be looked for from that stock. Unquestionable it is, that, if the known fact of our Lord's being descended from Judah did not contradict such an interpretation, they would be cited by commentators as containing a remarkable supernatural prediction of his origin. If the words were written by Moses, I can give no more probable account of them, than that they were intended for an honorable testimony to Joshua, who, descended from Joseph, was well entitled to the distinction of being called a shepherd and pillar of Israel.

¶ 25. Nearly the first half of this verse I would connect with the preceding; "By the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel); even by the God of thy father, who hath helped thee, and by the Almighty." Then begins a new sentence.

brethren put away from them, may the fulfilled benedictions of his father descend in immeasurably greater abundance, than have come upon that father himself the blessings implored for him by his own progenitors." *

The address to Benjamin appears, evidently enough, to be a reference to his fierce and tenacious character; though in what ways this had been exhibited, the history does not declare. It seems to be, as if the dying father had said; "For my youngest son it would be useless to feel anxiety; he has qualities to make ample provision for himself." †

The discourse, thus reported by tradition to have been addressed by the dying patriarch to his children, it may be presumed, had, in descending from his time to that of Moses, been subject to mutilations and additions; especially it is likely, that the parts relating to Judah and Joseph may have received accessions during the period of the growth of those tribes to that condition of superiority over the rest, in which we find them at the period of the Exodus. Still it can be no matter of surprise to us, that Moses, if sensible of this, should have desired to incorporate the passage into his book. Whether in worse or better preservation, it was more than a great archæological curiosity. As far as it contained, which it might be supposed in a great

"And he [not "who," which is a less literal translation] shall [still] bless thee," &c.

* Gen. xlix. 26. Supposing the word הוֹרִי to be genuine, and to be rightly rendered, by our translators, "my progenitors," I take the sense of the verse to be what I have given in the text; to "prevail above [or excel] unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills," being equivalent to "excel immensely," as we say, "superior, heaven-wide," "toto cœlo distans." But it must be owned, that there is a great difficulty in either rendering הוֹרִי "my progenitors," or giving it any other sense, or devising any satisfactory emendation of the text, though this latter has been attempted in some of the manuscripts and versions.

† 27.

measure to do, the sense of Jacob, expressed under such interesting circumstances, — as far, especially, as it conveyed his impressions respecting the characters of his sons, and his wishes respecting the partition of the family patrimony among them, — it was a document eminently deserving the attention and care of his posterity. To judge from the little which we know of the mutual relations of the tribes, it was one part of Moses' task to hold the balance even between the rival houses of Judah and Joseph; and this passage, — while it exhibited these two as the favorite sons of Jacob, — in the superior place which it assigns to the former as leader of the people, and its apparent transfer to him of the place of first-born, forfeited by Reuben, would be a *set-off* (if I may so speak) to the narrative in the preceding chapter, in which that place seems to be given to Joseph, and would thus protect Moses from the suspicion of making himself, in his history, the partisan of either family. Did we know more of the relations of the several tribes to each other, it is likely we should be able to show, in other particulars, how the passage was useful to Moses in its application to circumstances of his own time.

We are next told of the charge of Jacob to his sons to bury him in the sepulchre of his ancestors in the promised land; * of his death,† and the mourning for

* Gen. xlix. 28-32. The mere existence of a tradition among the Jews of Moses' time to the effect, that Jacob and Joseph had ordered their remains to be conveyed to Palestine for burial, shows, that, during the intervening generations, the people had looked upon it as their home, from which they were only temporarily absent; in other words, it shows, that they had never abandoned their right to it, derived from its settlement by the patriarchs. From Acts vii. 15, 16, it appears, that, in the New Testament times, the rest of the children of Jacob were understood to have followed his example and that of Joseph, in taking care for their interment in the patrimonial soil.

† Gen. xlix. 33.

him in Egypt; * of his sons' proceeding, with the permission of Pharaoh, to execute his commands for his interment; of the notice which their expedition to Canaan, for this purpose, attracted; † of their return to Egypt; ‡ of the apprehensions of the elder brothers, lest, when deprived of the protection of their father, Joseph should visit upon them the injuries he had suffered at their hands; § of the magnanimous conduct by which he dissipated their suspicions, and the generosity which he still extended to them; || and, at length, at the close of the book, of his own death, at the age of a hundred and ten years, after directing, as his father had done, that his body should be conveyed to Canaan for burial, whenever his brothers should proceed thither to repossess their inheritance. ¶ In the careful preservation of the directions, given by Jacob and Joseph, respecting their interment in the promised land, and the minute account of the fulfilment of their wishes in this respect, it is impossible, I think, not to recognise a solicitude in Moses to show, that the intention of reclaiming that territory had never been relinquished. With this topic the matter contained in the context is so closely connected, besides having an independent interest for every descendant of the patriarchs, whose last acts and sayings are recorded, that no further account can be required of the care taken by Moses to hand it down.

With the book of Exodus opens a different scene in

* Gen. l. 1-3.

† l. 4-13. Comp. p. 121, note *. — "Pharaoh said, 'Go up, and bury thy father'" (6). So unlike was he to his successor, of whom the Israelites asked a similar favor; comp. Ex. v. 2. — "The name of it was called *Abel-mizraim*" (Gen. l. 11). The existence of this name in Moses' time was an authentic memorial of Joseph's burial.

‡ l. 14.

§ l. 15-18.

|| l. 19-21.

¶ l. 22-26; comp. page 121, note *; also Joshua xxiv. 32.

the fortunes of the Israelitish nation. Joseph being dead, and his services, perhaps, forgotten, when another sovereign succeeded, the royal favor, extended to them on his account, was withdrawn. The rapid growth of their numbers gave rise to apprehensions of insubordination on their part, which it became the policy of the court to guard against, by breaking their spirit with excessive toil; and at length the extreme measure was resorted to, of issuing a decree to arrest their growth by putting to death every male child.*

* Ex. i. 1-22. — The recapitulation of the family of Jacob, in 1-5 (comp. Gen. xvi. 8-27) is some indication of the beginning of another section, and, accordingly, of a division of the Pentateuch into parts, when first composed. — "And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls" (Ex. i. 5). As it is necessary to include Jacob in this sum, the statement may pass for what the rhetoricians call an *ἀνυπόληπτος*, but it is no more so than Milton's "the fairest of her daughters, Eve." — "The children of Israel are more and mightier than we" (9). It would be losing sight of the spirit of the passage, to interpret this as a literal statement of a fact. Pharaoh uses the natural language of exaggeration, under a feeling of alarm. — "The king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah" (15). These, say the commentators, were the principal persons of that profession, and the king gave his order to them, that they might transmit it to the rest. But this exposition has its rise in the idea, that the plan for exterminating the Hebrew race, by putting to death its infant males, was a deliberate, solemn, methodical proceeding of the government, which I conceive there is no evidence that it was, but quite the contrary. It is true, that infanticide has been practised by different nations, ancient and modern. It is also true, that the murder of slaves, on a large scale, so as to keep down their numbers, has been resorted to. It was so by the Spartans; see Plutarch's "Lycurgus," § 28. But that there was no permanent and actually executed law of the Egyptians to this effect, in the present case, I take to be evident from the number of the Israelites, contemporaries of Moses. The policy of fear is irresolute and fickle. All that I gather from the narrative before us is, that one idea, which had occurred, was that of checking the growth of the Israelites by destroying a number of their male children at the birth; and that, among the number of midwives whom their women must have employed, two were known to the Hebrews to have been tampered with by the court for that purpose, — the scheme, as far as there was any, being to extend the same method of

At this juncture Moses was born ; and, under the guidance of that Providence which had destined him to act so great a part, the method taken for his concealment led to his being found and adopted by a daughter of the king. Under her care he was educated ; and this is all that Moses tells us of his own history, down to that time, already treated of in these Lectures, when arrived at mature age, he was able to testify to events from his own knowledge.* He had no object

proceeding, as circumstances should allow. And the same remark I would apply to verse 22, which I understand rather as a vague recommendation, or even mere permission, of the government, than a strict legal enactment. — “He made them houses” (21); this is commonly understood to mean, that, because of the righteous conduct of the midwives, God prospered them in their families. But I think the sense more probably is, that, through their refraining from the iniquitous course proposed to them, the Israelitish families continued to increase. The pronoun, translated *them*, is of the masculine form.

* Ex. ii. 1–10. — “There went a man of the house of Levi” &c. (1). Whether Amram was Moses’ father, and a remote descendant from Levi, or Levi’s grandson, and a remote ancestor of Moses, I look in vain for means to determine. It is clear, however, that Moses could not have been, as, at the first reading of Ex. vi. 18, 20, might be supposed, a descendant from Levi in the third generation by his father’s side, and in the second by his mother’s. See Vol. I. p. 140, note. To the considerations there presented, I add that of the manifest impossibility, that the Kohathites, in the first or second generation from their father, should have increased to such a number as we are told (Numb. iii. 28) that they had reached in the time of Moses. Considering the improbable age ascribed to Amram (Ex. vi. 20), and that, in Ex. vi. 18, and Numb. iii. 19, the object appears to be to mention Kohath’s children, corresponding to so many branches of his family in later times, I incline, on the whole, to the opinion, that Amram was not Moses’ father, but his remote ancestor, and Levi’s grandson. It is true, that the language, “She [Jochebed] bare him Aaron and Moses,” (Ex. vi. 20, comp. Numb. xxvi. 59,) is strong, but no stronger than occurs elsewhere, where we know that literal parentage was not intended ; comp. Mat. i. 8, 9, with 1 Chron. iii. 11, 12. And, indeed, the same difficulty occurs on the other supposition (Numb. xxvi. 59), since Jochebed is said, in the use of the same expression, to have been Levi’s daughter. — “An ark of bulrushes” (Ex. ii. 3) ; to protect him, perhaps, from crocodiles, which are said to avoid this plant. — “She called his name *Moses*, and she said, ‘Because I drew

in relating any more than was necessary to connect his account of the previous condition of the Israelites with that of his entrance on the duties of their leader. The later historian of the nation, Josephus,* fills up the chasm with a narrative of adventures of the great lawgiver in his childhood and youth. But how much of this he owed to tradition, and how much to invention, it would be fruitless now to conjecture.

In the course of this examination of the historical matter preserved by Moses, relating to periods antecedent to his own, and respecting which, as far as appears, he had no information beyond what other men of his time might have possessed, I have endeavoured to show reasons, why, independently of any opinion entertained by him respecting its circumstantial truth, he should have desired to incorporate it into his work. Still, the question naturally presents itself to every reader, what degree of credibility is to be ascribed to the fragments of ancient history thus collected. It is a question, I conceive, only to be answered, at this distant day, in very general terms. Substantially all that can be said is, that tradition generally contains a basis of truth; while, on the other hand, it generally becomes corrupt in proportion to the length of time, elapsing between the period to which it relates, and that to which it has descended; the degree of corruption being further proportioned to the civilization or rudeness of the people among whom it has been transmitted.

Inquiries, arising out of the application of these plain

him out of the water'" (10). Several ancient commentators, both Jewish and Christian, make out this etymology from an Egyptian word, *Mos*, signifying water. An Egyptian derivation of a word, applied by a daughter of Pharaoh, is rather to be looked for than a Hebrew one.

* Lib. ii. cap. 9, § 7; cap. 10, § 1, 2.

principles to the documents that have been before us, have, in my judgment, by no means the importance which is apt to be attributed to them. As far as concerns the lives of the patriarchs, the sole question of real interest for the religious inquirer of the present time, — since it is the only one which connects itself with the theory of religion, — is, what revelations, if any, were made to them by the Divine Being. And that question, it so happens, — or rather, I should say, it has been so providentially ordered, — that we shall answer in much the same manner, whether we ascribe to the book of Genesis more or less historical authority.

The communications made by God to the patriarchs, independently of matters of mere personal concern to them, related, according to Genesis, to four particulars. Their descendants were to possess the country of Canaan; those descendants were to be numerous; one of them was to be a blessing to all nations;* and they were to observe the rite of circumcision. That all these communications were made, as Genesis represents them to have been, is a thing perfectly credible to any one who believes in the divine authority of the subsequent mission of Moses. But were that book lost, or whether more or less historical authority be ascribed to it, we know equally well, that the things, to which the communications are represented to have referred, did take place. The Jewish race did obtain possession of Canaan; they did become numerous; they did furnish a benefactor to the world;

* These three promises are represented to have been given to Abraham, in Gen. xii. 1–3, 7; to Isaac, in xxvi. 3, 4; and to Jacob in xxviii. 13, 14; also the first two to Jacob in xxxv. 11, 12; xlviii. 4. Circumcision, once instituted, as we read, in xvii. 10–14, that it was, by a direction to Abraham, the command concerning it did not need to be repeated.

and they did observe circumcision. Nay; the fact of the Divine Being having sustained a peculiar relation to the patriarchs,* and having made to them part of these self-same revelations,† is known to us independently of the evidence in Genesis, and by evidence of a much superior character, even upon that of God's own declarations, and of appeals of Moses to him founded upon a knowledge of the transactions;—declarations and appeals recorded in books, which relate to what fell within Moses' own experience. As to the rest, he who would maintain, that, if Moses received from God supernatural communications, he would of course be supernaturally instructed concerning events in the lives of his remote ancestors, so that his claims to a miraculous commission, and the accuracy of the relations in Genesis, must stand or fall together, certainly undertakes a task which there is no logic to bear out. The Law, which Moses established, stood upon the evidence of the miracles which had accompanied its promulgation. But it was not the less a judicious undertaking in him to confirm its statements and provisions by the use of topics drawn from other sources; nor is there any reasonable or plausible ground for saying, that his Divine Guide should either, on the one hand, have prohibited his taking this course, or, on the other, should have confused the people's minds, already sufficiently occupied and tasked, by undertaking to clear them of all error in respect to their national traditions,—which was, of course, the thing to be done, if any instruction whatever, on the subject, were attempted.

* Ex. iii. 6, 13, 15, 16; iv. 5; Deut. x. 15.

† Ex. xiii. 5; xxxii. 13; Numb. xiv. 23; Deut. i. 35; iv. 31; vi. 10, 18; vii. 8, 12, 13; viii. 18; ix. 5; x. 11; xi. 9, 21; xiii. 17; xix. 8; xxix. 13; xxx. 20; xxxi. 20.

It may be expected, that, before passing from this part of our subject, I should say a few words respecting the chronology of the events to which we have hitherto attended ; or rather, concerning the chronology of that portion of them which falls within the range of authentic history, — since whoever sees reason to adopt the view which I have been presenting of the character of the book of Genesis, will, of course, regard every attempt to fix the date of the Creation, or of the Universal Deluge (if there were one), as utterly futile.

It follows, from this last remark, that such dates as can be determined must have reference to some recognised standard, of which the most convenient for us is the Christian era, and not to any assumed age of the world. If the Hebrew text, where the requisite numerical statements are made, could be relied upon as free from corruptions, there would be no difficulty in obtaining all the information upon this subject which is of much importance ; though it is true, there would still be room for some latitude of interpretation, arising chiefly from the circumstance, that where round numbers occur, they cannot be supposed to have been used with precision, and further considerations must be introduced to determine, whether they were intended to signify something more, or something less, than, literally taken, they denote.

It would be an attempt altogether foreign from the purpose of these Lectures, to undertake, in any part of them, to present a review of the different chronological systems, spreading, as the argument necessarily does, over a wide extent, and descending into minute details of inquiry and calculation. The examination, as far as it could be pursued, would also be premature at this stage of our inquiries, as those *data* for it, which are to be obtained from the Jewish Scriptures, are

furnished by books which have not yet come under our notice. But a few words here, exhibiting, in a cursory way, the state of the controversy, may not be out of place.

Most of the principal chronologers, — Scaliger, Petau, Usher,* Whiston, and others, — adopt, for their basis of calculation, the Hebrew text, though their inferences from the data which it furnishes do not altogether coincide. Hales, one of the great recent authorities, entertaining the opinion, that the Hebrew text is so corrupt in this particular, as to afford no ground of reliance, arranged his elaborate work upon the basis of the chronology of Josephus, or rather, of the chronology of his own proposed restorations of the text of that writer. But I cannot but think, that, in the existing state of our knowledge on the subject, the former is much the safer and more judicious course. I would not pretend, that the correctness of the Hebrew copies, in the passages which belong to this argument, can be confidently maintained. But, on the other hand, there is nothing to bring suspicion upon those of them which are of importance in the inquiry, while, as to the principal contradiction which Josephus offers to their testimony (that of interposing an additional hundred years and more, between the Exodus and the Building of the Temple), we see, at a glance, what it probably was, that led him into error. He probably assumed, that the administrations of the Judges, mentioned in the book known by that name, with the *inter-regna* between them, were successive, and that their length is rightly recorded. An easy computation will show, that, had this assumption been well-founded,

* The chronology, exhibited in the margin of our English Bibles, is that of Usher.

his statement respecting the interval between the two events in question (that is, supposing his text, in the most important passage,* to be truly given in the received editions), would have been correct. But it is an assumption without proof or probability.

By the aid of the Canon of Ptolemy,† it is well agreed among chronologers, that the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar occurred in the year 588 before the Christian era, or within two years earlier or later than that time, which for the purposes of these remarks, may be assumed as the correct date. According to the statement, in the Hebrew text, of the length of the reigns of the successive kings, and the intervals between them, the time from the foundation of

* In his "Antiquities" (Lib. viii. cap. 3, § 1, with which also agrees another passage, Lib. x. cap. 8, § 5), Josephus says, that 592 years elapsed between the Exodus and the foundation of the temple; and this probably was the common computation at that period, since it accords with the representation in Acts xiii. 20. The "four hundred and fifty years," there assigned to the time of the Judges, is precisely the sum of the length of the foreign servitudes, and of the periods of "rest" between them, as specified in the book of Judges and the first book of Samuel, iv. 18. And if, to this sum, be added the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, 17 years for Joshua, the 40 of David's reign, 40 for the previous time of Samuel (including the reign of Saul, comp. Acts xiii. 21), and 4 for the years of Solomon's reign before he founded the Temple, we have the precise amount of 591 years. But in another place ("Antiquities," Lib. xx. cap. 10, § 1) Josephus, as we now have his text, gives 612 instead of 592 years, between the Exodus and the Temple. Hales, while he ascribes to Josephus paramount authority in the matter, rejects both these statements as corruptions of the text, and, by computations, founded on a comparison of two other passages of that writer, which, however, only prove, that he was inconsistent with himself, attempts to show, that Josephus really understood the interval in question to have been not of 592 or 612, but of 621 years. See Hales's "New Analysis of Chronology," Vol. I. pp. 98, 100.

† The Canon of Ptolemy, the celebrated Egyptian astronomer, geographer, and chronologist, who flourished in the second century after Christ, is of the highest importance in these investigations. Marsham goes so far as to say, that, without it, "there could scarcely be any transition from sacred to profane history."

the Temple, in the fourth year of Solomon, to its destruction under Jehoiachin, was four hundred and twenty-four years.* This gives the year 1012 before Christ for the date of the foundation of the Temple. And, according to the date in the first book of Kings, the Temple was founded "in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt."† From these data we are accordingly led to the conclusion (making no allowance for fractions of years), that the Exodus took place in the year 1492 before Christ; and the migration of Jacob with his family into Egypt, four hundred and thirty years earlier,‡ will be referred to the year 1922 before Christ. If we understand the text just quoted from the book of Kings to relate (as perhaps it did) to the arrival of the Jews in Palestine, rather than to their departure from Egypt, we shall then have to add to these sums forty years occupied by the wanderings in the wilderness. And if we see cause to adopt the received chronology of Josephus, we shall date the Exodus and the earlier events a hundred and twelve years further back.§

* Viz. 36 remaining years of Solomon's reign; 91 years from the accession of Rehoboam to the throne, to that of Athaliah; 163 more to the Captivity of the Ten Tribes; and 134 from that event to the destruction of the Temple. See Whiston's "Short View of the Chronology of the Old Testament," pp. 83-94.

† 1 Kings vi. 1.

‡ Ex. xii. 41.

§ The following table represents the views of the principal chronologists respecting the three great events, to which the above remarks relate.

	Exodus.	Foundation of the Temple.	Destruction of Do.
Scaliger	1497	1018	590
Petau	1531	1012	589

[Petau allows 40 years of interval more than Scaliger between the Exodus and Solomon, in consequence of understanding 1 Kings vi. 1, to refer to the arrival of the Jews in Palestine.]

Usher	1491	1012	588
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It would be highly satisfactory to ascertain, were it possible, to what period and condition of the Egyptian monarchy, either of these dates would refer the departure of the Jews from that country. But the inquiries, zealously pursued to this end, have as yet resulted in nothing, which, to a calm observation, can appear worthy of reliance. Nothing that can properly be called knowledge, respecting the ancient history of Egypt, extends to an earlier epoch than the reign of Psammeticus, in the sixth century before our era. The indefatigable and most praiseworthy labors which have been bestowed upon the materials furnished by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, and the fragments of Eratosthenes and Manetho, have as yet resulted in little beyond a conviction of irreconcilable contradiction and inextricable confusion in their accounts. The chief hope which remains is, that the discoveries of Champollion and Young may lead to the obtaining, from the Egyptian inscriptions, of some portion of the information which we seek.

On the age, to which Moses and Aaron are said to have arrived, I have already remarked.* No clear in-

	Exodus.		Foundation of the Temple.		Destruction of Do.
Marsham	1488	.	1008	.	608
Playfair	1555	.	1015	.	588
Jackson	1593	.	1014	.	586
Hales	1648	.	1027	.	586
Whiston	1491	.	1011	.	587

Respecting the dates of the Creation and the Universal Deluge, the views of a large number of writers may be seen compared in Hales's "New Analysis" &c. Vol. I. pp. 3-8. The results of different calculations upon different data, — of Hebrew, Greek, and Samaritan authority, — range, for the first event, between about 4,000 and about 6,000 B. C. ; and, for the second, from about 2,300 to about 3,200 B. C. With respect to those dates, I am content to say, with many writers, Pagan and Christian, quoted by Usher, in his prefatory Epistle, that we have no materials for reasoning about them.

* Vol. I. p. 507, note.

stance * can be shown, besides these two, of a reference by Moses to any extraordinary longevity, † except when, from the necessity of the case, he is using authorities relating to times much more ancient than his own. In other words, no other clear instance can be shown, of his asserting any thing of the kind as within his own knowledge or belief. And, in connexion with this topic, it is a material fact, that a Psalm, which has come down to us as his, speaks of seventy and eighty years as constituting a long life in his time, just as they are known to do in ours. ‡

* I say, "no clear instance," because I have argued above (p. 124, note) that Amram (said, Ex. vi. 20, to have lived to the age of a hundred and thirty-seven years) was quite as probably (or more so) the remote ancestor of Moses, as his father. Kohath (who died, according to Ex. vi. 18, at the age of a hundred and thirty-three) was one generation still further back. No one, of a more recent period than that of Isaac, is said to have attained to the age of a century and a half. Except Kohath and Amram, we find no record, between Joseph and Moses (four hundred years), of a life longer than Joseph's own, which was a hundred and ten years. In short, the statements on this head, which had come down to Moses, had approached nearer to the limits of probability as they approached the period of authentic history.

† Comp. Ex. vii. 7, Deut. i. 3.

‡ Psalm xc. 10.

when sufficient means of becoming acquainted with the exact truth were accessible, and under circumstances which would have caused it to be rejected and to go into oblivion, if in any thing important it departed from that truth. If we are satisfied, that a history was written by a contemporary of the facts narrated, or by one who lived a short time after that of their alleged occurrence, it comes to us, provided other circumstances are favorable, with a high degree of authority. If we are not able to ascertain this, the great ground of credit fails. If, on the other hand, we see reason to conclude, that a history was framed several generations or centuries after the time when the events, which it records, are alleged to have taken place, then we are at a loss what confidence to repose in it, except so far as we are able to see, that it rested on earlier authorities, and that those authorities were trustworthy. And, under such circumstances, the more such events are of a marvellous and extraordinary kind, the less credible do they become. It is the business of tradition, especially in a rude age, to confound imaginations with realities; to take a basis of fact, and build upon it a superstructure of fable. And the materials for the early history of almost every nation of the world have to be sifted from a mass of legend and romance.

In urging the credibility of the history which records the miraculous deliverance of the Jewish nation from Egypt, the communication to them of the Law, and their political and religious consolidation, I took the ground of the credibility of its author; — endeavouring to show, that there was good and sufficient reason to believe, that the writer of that history was no other than a contemporary of the events which it relates, and the principal human actor in them. So far as the evidence offered to that point produces conviction in any

mind, so far will that mind be satisfied of the truth of the history. If we can prove the same thing concerning the book of Joshua, a similar conviction of its authority will follow. If we cannot prove, that this book was written by one who lived at the time to which it relates, then it remains for us to inquire, by whom it was written; or, at least, at what time, and with what materials. In proportion as we may be able to answer these inquiries, we shall obtain aid towards some conclusions respecting its authority as a record of veritable history.

But, before proceeding to these inquiries, I wish to make a preliminary remark, having reference equally to all that portion of the Old Testament collection which we have not yet examined. It is certain, that the current opinion among Christians, which places the rest of the Old Testament upon substantially the same footing with the books of Moses, in point of authority, — an opinion supposed by Christians to have been that of the Jews themselves, and therefore well sustained and sound, because entertained by those, who had means of coming at the truth, — is not justified by what we know, or can reasonably infer, respecting the opinions of the ancient people. On the contrary, the ascribing to the other Old Testament books a similar authority to that of the books of Moses, appears to have been a distinction of the Pharisees, a sect of recent origin among that small portion of the Jewish people, which returned to the Holy Land after the Babylonish captivity, and which still remained there, when many of their compatriots emigrated, at a later time.

Had all that portion of the race, which lived in Palestine after the return, entertained this view, their number was not such, as to authorize their sense, on such a question, to be taken for that of the great people,

which had now been politically ruined, and its fragments scattered over the remote East. But far less than this was the case. A portion of that number were transferred to Egypt, under Alexander and the Ptolemies. Among them, the Septuagint version was produced. Of this all critics agree, that the Pentateuch alone was translated at first, and no part of the rest till after a considerable interval, probably of more than a century. The natural account to be given of this, is, that the Law was considered as containing the Jewish religion, or, at least, as having a peculiar and paramount authority in distinction from the other books.

To go further back ; if other books, now in the Old Testament collection, had been regarded, by the ancient nation, as fit to be placed on a level with the Law in point of authority, or even as, in any respect, authoritative witnesses to the faith, there is every reason, why we should expect to find the Samaritans in possession of all other books, belonging to the collection, which were written previously to the time when they ceased to receive books from the Jews ; there is every reason, I say, why we should expect to find all such books in their possession, as much as the Law, which we do find there.* Now, the earliest time, which, from the nature of the case, can be designated as the period of suspension of intercourse between the northern and southern tribes, is that of Jeroboam, when they parted into two kingdoms. Previously to this, the books of Joshua and Judges, at least, had been written (if the date commonly assigned to them is correct), and many of the Psalms and Proverbs. But these books there is no appearance that they took care to preserve.

* See Vol. I. p. 47, note †. Also, the Samaritan *Version* includes only the Pentateuch. The Samaritans had, in times since the Christian era, a Book of Joshua, so called. But this fact only strengthens the argu-

I have remarked above, that, even among that small portion of the ancient Jewish people, which returned to Palestine after the dispersion, the confounding of the authority of the other Old Testament books with that of the books of Moses, appears to be a peculiarity of one sect, that of the Pharisees. Beside the Pharisees, there were two other sects, both of which, it is probable, were better authorities on such a question, by reason of their greater intelligence and learning, and their greater freedom from superstition; and the views of one, and probably those of the other, upon this point, were not those of the Pharisees, nor those of Christian writers. These sects were the Sadducees and the Caraites. The views of the Caraites, it must be owned, are very imperfectly known; but their acknowledged sympathy with the Sadducees, in many of their tenets, creates a presumption of their accordance with that sect in this particular among the rest.*

Concerning the opinions of the Sadducees on this

ment, since it is a quite different composition from our book of that name. The Samaritan Joshua has never been published; but a manuscript copy, presented by Scaliger, is in the University Library at Leyden. It is in the Arabic language, though in the Samaritan character. Bishop Gray ("Key to the Old Testament," p. 149,) describes it as containing "a chronicle of events, badly compiled, from the death of Moses to the time of the emperor Adrian," and then adds, in his satisfactory way, that it "differs considerably from the Hebrew copy." For an epitome of its contents, see Fabricius's "Codex Pseudepigraphus Vet. Test." pp. 878-888. There is yet another Samaritan *Joshua*, containing a history, extending from the beginning of the world to A. D. 1492. It is, of course, of still less consequence, if possible, in this argument.

* For an account of the Caraites, whose history is very obscure, (their own writers claiming for them an origin as remote as the time of Ezra, and even as that of Solomon, while the Rabbins allow them to have made a distinct party as early as that of Alexander the Great,) see Basnage, "Histoire des Juifs," Liv. ii. chap. 8, 9. He refers their rise to the period of Ptolemy Philadelphus. Compare Buxtorf's "Lex. Chald. and Talm." p. 2112; Godwin's "Moses and Aaron," Book i. chap. 9; Simon's "Hist. Crit. du V. T." Liv. i. chap. 29.

head, two authorities will suffice for our purpose. "The Sadducees," says Origen, "as well as the Samaritans, receive only the books of Moses"*; and Jerome, to the same effect, in a note upon our Lord's conversation with some of that sect respecting the resurrection; "They received only the five books of Moses, rejecting the oracles of the Prophets."† I cannot resist such evidence, but I explain it in a different way from what has been usual. I think it shows, that different books, free from any suspicion in point of authenticity, were, however, held in different estimation as to character, importance, and authority, by different portions of the Jewish race. What the Sadducees rejected was, as I understand, not the genuineness of the books of the Prophets, but that character of supernatural, and therefore absolute authority, which the Pharisees, on the contrary, ascribed to them. The distinction, which they made, was, that the Law was the authentic and authoritative record of a revelation from God, and that

* Οἱ μόνου δὲ Μωϋσέως παραδεχόμενοι τὰς βίβλους Σαμαριτῶν ἢ Σαδδουκαίων. — Origen. "Contra Cels." Lib. i. § 49.

† "Hi quinque tantum libros Moysis recipiebant, prophetarum vaticinia respuentes." Hieron. in Mat. xxii. 32; "Opera," Vol. IV. p. 106. Edit. Paris. In opposition to these authorities and to established opinion upon this subject, Josephus has been quoted as saying, ("Antiquities," Lib. xiii. cap. 10, § 6,) that the Sadducees receive *all which is written*. But nothing can be less to the purpose of this argument, than what he actually does say. He is speaking of the difference between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, in respect to the authority ascribed by them severally to traditionary additions to the Law and comments upon it, and he says; "The Pharisees delivered to the people as obligatory, on the ground of tradition of the fathers, many things which *are not written* in the laws of Moses, and for that reason the Sadducean party rejects these things, saying that those things only should be esteemed obligatory *which are written*, and that it is not needful to observe what rests only on tradition of the fathers." Νόμιμα πολλὰ τινὰ παρέδουν τῷ δήμῳ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἐκ πατέρων διαδοχῆς, ἅσπερ οὐκ ἀναγέγραπται ἐν ταῖς Μωϋσέως νόμοις, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα τὰ Σαδδουκαίων γίνεσι ἐκβάλλου, λίγον ἐκείνα διὸν ἡγέσθαι νόμιμα τὰ γεγραμμένα, τὰ δ' ἐκ παραδόσεως τῶν πατέρων μὴ τηρεῖν.

the Prophets and other writings, however valuable and useful else, were not the record of such a revelation.*

That they were right in making such a distinction, I do not now maintain. We have not yet arrived at that stage in our inquiries, where the argument may be conveniently held. Before we can decide the point, we must have looked successively at the respective claims of the several books, whose similar authority to that of the Law is brought into question. I state the fact now, in order to show, that a wide distinction between the Law, and all other books in the Old Testament collection, should we see cause to make one, would be no novelty. We should have abundant and weighty Jewish authority to plead in its support. We should have the authority of a large part of that nation, whose supposed authority is the stronghold of the opposite view.

Who wrote the book of Joshua? We are unable to answer the question upon any grounds, either of history, or of internal evidence. Its being called by Joshua's name is a fact which has no force to show it to be his production, even if we knew, that that name had been given it from the first. A book is denominated from its subject, as well as from its writer; nor does any one imagine, that the works, called by the names of the Judges and of Ruth, proceeded from those persons respectively. So far are the later books of the Old Testament from giving any information respecting the origin of this, that they do not so much as refer to its existence.† The ascription of it to Joshua is a mere conjecture of the later Jews; a conjecture of

* Since writing the above, I observe, that the interpretation there proposed of the language of Origen and Jerome is favored by Basnage; see "*Histoire des Juifs*," Liv. ii. chap. 6, § 7.

† The text, 1 Kings xvi. 34, makes no exception to this remark. It

not even the little plausibility of others, which have assigned it to Samuel and to Ezra.*

That, whenever composed, it was, in part, at least, derived from different sources, and not the original, continuous narrative of one writer, may be safely inferred from certain phenomena. Not to lay too much stress on apparent references to earlier writings,† some passages are but repetitions of others, and different parts exhibit representations mutually contradictory, as will appear in the course of these remarks.

The question, respecting the time when the book was composed, is one which we are as little able to answer as that respecting its author; that it was at a period considerably later than that, to which the events recorded are referred, is a necessary conclusion from the remarks just now made. That substantially the same incidents should be differently related, and then that the narratives should come into the hands of a compiler, who, uncertain which, if either, was circumstantially correct, should have recourse to the use of both, implies the lapse of some considerable time. And this conclusion is strengthened by the frequent declarations in the book, that something related continues in the same condition "to this day," implying (particularly when it is used, as in some instances it is, of objects

refers to words which Joshua was understood to have uttered. But as to the way in which those words had been preserved, whether by oral tradition, or in this or some other book, it is silent. A similar remark applies to 1 Chron. ii. 7.

* "And Joshua wrote these words in the book [or in a book] of the Law of God" (Josh. xxiv. 26); this text has been adduced in the present question, as if it declared Joshua to be the author of the whole preceding composition. But it is clear, from the context (comp. 19-25), that it relates only to the promise, which Joshua had just exacted from the people, of future fidelity. This he made a record of, says the writer, upon a copy of the Law of Moses.

† E. g. x. 13; xviii. 4.

which from their nature could not be expected soon to disappear), that the permanency was something observable, considering the length of time that had since expired.* The like inference is drawn from texts, in which something anciently existing is spoken of as having now ceased.†

If it be said, that such texts as have been referred to may have been only later interpolations into the body of the book, which itself may have been composed in or near Joshua's time, the reply is, that, numerous as they are, that remark may deserve attention, when any proof shall first be produced, establishing a presumption, that the body of the work was so composed. The difference, in this respect, between the book of Joshua and the Pentateuch, is as follows. If the views which have been taken of the latter are correct, we find good evidence, that the bulk of it was written by the person to whom it has been commonly ascribed, an eyewitness of the events which it records; and, considering the character of a small number of passages, to which it is necessary to assign a later date, we find no difficulty in regarding them as subsequent interpolations from other hands. Proceeding to the book of Joshua, we find numerous passages which naturally refer themselves to a period later than the time of that leader; and we find no reason whatever to conclude, that the book was put into its present shape in or near to his time, and no good reason even to suppose, that this was the case with any considerable portion of the different materials of which it is made up. Under these circumstances, if they are correctly stated, there would be no positive justification for regarding the work as a contemporaneous his-

* Josh. iv. 9; v. 9; vi. 25; vii. 26; viii. 28; ix. 27; x. 27; xiii. 13; xiv. 14; xv. 63; xvi. 10.

† E. g. xi. 10; xv. 15, 54, 60; xix. 47.

tory; while, on the other hand, all the proof we have leads to the conclusion, that it belongs to a much later time than the events which make its subject.

To how much later a time than that of the conquest of Canaan, the book should be referred, is another question of interest, and another question to which we are unable to give any definite reply. The opinion of those critics, who would refer it to so recent a period as that of the Exile, or that of the reign of Ahab, will, in the view of one, who ascribes the Pentateuch to Moses, appear to have little probability, when he considers the similarity between the style of the Pentateuch and that of Joshua,* and observes how pure is the Hebrew of the latter book, and how free from foreign words, forms, and idioms. And it appears to me, that an argument, which has been drawn from one text to show that the book was compiled before the eighth year of David's reign, has such force, that, in the absence of further information, that conclusion is reasonably to be adopted. In the sixty-third verse of the fifteenth chapter, we read as follows; "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem *unto this day*;" but, according to the account in the second book of Samuel,† David, in the eighth year of his reign, dispossessed the Jebusites of their position in that city. Further; that it was written not long after the time of the establishment of the monarchy, we shall be disposed to believe, if we see reason, in our examination of the book of Judges, to refer the early part of that book to the reign either of Saul or of David; inasmuch as the writer of

* De Wette agrees in the fullest manner to this statement, though he assigns to the book a late origin. "Beytrage zur Einleitung," &c. B. i. s. 137.

† v. 6-9.

Judges, taking up the history, as he does, at the death of Joshua, may be reasonably supposed to have been acquainted with the book which records the exploits of that leader.

The text of Joshua has come down to us in a corrupt state, as is evident from an inspection of the book, parts of which it is impossible to suppose were left by the writer in their present condition.* And from this fact, compared with the greater integrity of the text of the Pentateuch, I draw another argument for the different kind of estimation in which the latter work was held, causing a different degree of care to be taken for its preservation.

The general design of the book evidently was, to give an account of the occupation of Canaan by the Israelites. It easily divides itself into four parts. The first, including the first eleven chapters, describes the course of Joshua's victories; the second, the twelfth chapter, contains a list of the conquered princes and tribes; the third, occupying ten chapters, relates the settlements of the tribes in their several possessions; and the fourth records, in two chapters, the last exhortations of Joshua, and his death.

In many parts, at least, the writer, if I mistake not, has pursued his design in the spirit of an antiquary and of a collector of local legends, rather than in that of an historian. He is one of those, for whom ancient monuments, and the histories, which, in time, have become connected with them, have an especial charm. It is

* E. g.; in Josh. xv. 21-32, thirty-eight cities are enumerated, but in summing them up in verse 32, they are said to be twenty-nine; in xv. 33-36 are fifteen names, but in verse 36 the sum is fourteen; in xix. 15, are but five names, which are called twelve; in xix. 30, and 35-38, the cities specified are respectively three and sixteen, but the sums (verses 30 and 38) are twenty-two and nineteen.

remarkable, in what numerous instances his narratives have reference to some existing monument or institution of old date. At one of the fords of the Jordan, in his time, there is a heap of twelve stones on the river's bank, and another in its bed.* They may have been thrown together for any of a variety of reasons which may be conjectured; not improbably they were erected (the number twelve corresponding to that of the tribes) in commemoration of some event of national importance. But local tradition (always busy in all nations, in giving accounts of artificial appearances, indicating care, but of unknown origin) had connected them with miraculous circumstances of the passage of the people into their inheritance; and this representation the writer seizes on, and incorporates into his book. The city nearest to this ford, on the western side of Jordan, was named *Gilgal*. Tradition had undertaken to account for the name, explaining it as commemorative of an incident of the invasion; and this explanation the writer adopts and preserves.† An honorable Jewish family was known, in his day, to have descended from a Canaanitish woman; and certain other Canaanites, contrary to the ostensible policy of the nation, were employed in offices about the sanctuary.‡ There had come down accounts of these facts, true or otherwise, which, satisfying this writer's curiosity, were thought by him worthy to be presented to his readers. The naming of the valley of Achor and the city of Dan,§ the monuments at Hai, Makkeda, and Shechem, || the valuable inheritance in the female line of Caleb, ¶ the altar on the west of Jordan,** and the tombs at Gaash, Shechem, and Gabaath,†† were facts and objects,

* Josh. iv. 1-9, 20. † v. 2-9. ‡ ii. (comp. Ruth. iv. 26); ix.

§ Josh. vii. 26; xix. 47. || viii. 29; x. 27; xxiv. 26.

¶ xv. 19.

** xxii.

†† xxiv. 30, 32, 33.

which tradition had undertaken, correctly or otherwise, to explain ; and its testimony, on these subjects, the writer of the book of Joshua applied himself to collect and report.

How far the testimony of tradition, as to these particulars, was well founded in fact, it was probably impossible in his time, and certainly it is so in ours, to form a precise opinion. Tradition preserves correctly among a people the outline of its political revolutions. It always tends to add unfounded details to these, and to connect its fables with existing monuments, the true history of which has been lost. Thus every Italian ruin and Scottish cairn has its story. But because the testimony of tradition, as such, is not conclusive, it by no means follows, that, in a given case, it is untrue. It may well be, that the report is correct, though evidence of its correctness can no longer be produced. When the event related is itself probable, the testimony of tradition to its actual occurrence has a degree of weight. When it is improbable, a mere vague and unsupported tradition cannot entitle it to credit. And when, if true, it would be miraculous, no reasonable man, — no man capable of perceiving what is at stake on the representation, — can receive it on any such authority.

In the book of Joshua are accounts of events, which, if they occurred, were miracles of the most remarkable character. The ceasing of the course of the Jordan, the fall of the walls of Jericho, and the staying of the diurnal revolution of the earth, are instances of such. To the last of these representations, apply considerations peculiar to itself. As to the two former events, I am so far from regarding them as essentially incredible, that I conceive the question of their credibility to depend distinctly on another question, which we have not the means to determine. Was it or was

it not, important, for reasons regarding the divine administration of the Jewish people, to pursue, for a time, a course of manifestation to them, while under the conduct of Joshua, similar to what had been pursued in the time of Moses? God will not work miracles except for some great reason, regarding the religious benefit of his children. For sufficient reasons he had displayed himself miraculously to this people through Moses. Did similar reasons exist for the somewhat longer continuance of such an administration?

It may have been fit, in the yet unsettled state of the people, to embolden them for their enterprise, and establish their confidence in Joshua, by miraculous demonstration of the continued divine protection, and divine commission, vouchsafed to them and him respectively; and for such a purpose may have been ordained a supernatural division of the waters of the Jordan, as before of the Red Sea. It may have been, that, for similar reasons, and also to convey such an alarm to the rest of the people of Canaan, as should lead them to avoid the bloodshed of a bootless conflict, a supernatural overthrow of the city of Jericho (the first city assailed) was ordained. These things may have been. I should hold it only rashness to deny, that the events thus related took place. But, on the other hand, that they actually did take place, I hold it to be much greater temerity to affirm. There is always a presumption against miraculous events. It is a presumption capable of being overborne by sufficient evidence; and it is overborne by such evidence, in respect to the miracles which established the Jewish revelation through Moses. But, in the present instance, we have not such evidence, in kind and degree, as belongs to such an exigency. We have not contemporaneous testimony. We do not know, that we have any thing more than remote

and uncertain tradition, such as might be adduced to support the most improbable legends in the history of any nation, civilized or savage.

I proceed to a brief survey of the principal contents of the first twelve chapters.

The first chapter records a direction of God to Joshua, after Moses' death, to proceed, without delay, to take possession of the country of Canaan, accompanied with an assurance, that, if studious to conform his administration to the Law, the divine favor should constantly attend him.* Joshua issues his orders to the people accordingly; † and particularly reminds the two tribes and a half, planted by Moses east of Jordan, of the condition on which they had received their lands, ‡ a condition which they solemnly profess their purpose to observe. §

The second chapter relates, how Joshua, through spies, who were secreted, while in Jericho, by a woman of that city, obtained information of the desponding state of mind of the inhabitants of Canaan, encouraging him to the invasion which he was projecting. As a recompense for her good offices, the spies promise to Rahab protection for herself and her family, when Jericho should become a conquest of the Israelitish army. ||

We have next, in two chapters, an account of a miraculous passage, into Canaan, through the Jordan, which is related to have stopped its current, and laid bare its bed, to make a dry path for the invaders, as the Red Sea had done, when, forty years before, their fathers had come out of Egypt. The circumstances of this event are described in a manner to correspond

* Josh. i. 1-9. † 10, 11. ‡ 12-15; comp. Numb. xxxii. 1-33.

§ Josh. i. 16-18.

|| "Joshua sent out of *Shittim* two men" (ii. 1); comp. Numb. xxv. 1; xxxiii. 48, 49.

with the purpose which, according to the writer's representation, it was intended to serve; namely, the purpose of Jehovah "to magnify" Joshua "in the sight of all Israel," and indicate, that the authority of Moses was transferred to him.* Joshua forewarns the people of the wonder which is about to be wrought, and bids them obtain assurance from it of the continued protection of the Almighty, and of his purpose to conduct them victoriously to their promised home.† All comes to pass as he had foretold. It was the harvest season, and the river was at its height.‡ But no sooner did the feet of the priests, who bore the ark, touch its brink, than the flood, which came down from above, was arrested over against Jericho, and rose into a heap, to let the procession of the Israelitish host go by. The priests kept their place, the river continuing to stand motionless, in reverence to the ark which was their charge, till the people had gained the other bank.§ Twelve men, one from every tribe, then took each man a stone from the spot which the presence of the ark had consecrated, to make of them a monument on the shore, to commemorate the great deliverance which had been wrought;|| and, another similar structure having been erected in the river's bed,¶ the priests,

* Josh. iii. 7; iv. 14. † iii. 10. ‡ iii. 15. § iii. 14-17.

|| iv. 1-8; comp. iii. 12. Some writers (see, for instance, Leslie's "Short Method with the Deists," pp. 16 *et seq.*) argue very hastily from the existence of monuments to the truth of history popularly connected with them. To such reasoners, the rock in Carmarthenshire, called "Merlin's Cave," would be a voucher for the marvels related of that magician, and the fact, that the Eildon hills are "cleft in three," would testify to the power of "the wondrous wizard, Michael Scott."

¶ Josh. iv. 9. I am doubtful, however, whether this text is not to be differently understood; for there is, in the original, no word corresponding to "other" introduced above into my paraphrase. Perhaps, after the monument at Gilgal, described by the writer in iv. 1-8, 20-24, had disappeared, the text, iv. 9, was added by another person, who meant to

with their sacred burden, went on their way, and the obedient waters resumed their course along their channel.*

The first part of the fifth chapter, after describing the effect upon the minds of the Canaanites of the marvellous occurrence last related,† proceeds to an account of the origin of the names of two places near the Jordan, Gibeath-Araloth and Gilgal.‡ It is an account, I conceive, in the highest degree improbable. The reason intimated by the writer for the omission, during the forty years passed in the wilderness, of a rite transmitted from the fathers of the race, and recently enforced anew by the authority

say, that the reason, why the stones were not seen in his day, was, that they had been erected, not, as had been commonly supposed from the record, near to the bank of the Jordan, but in its bed.

* Josh. iv. 10-19. — "According to all that Moses commanded Joshua" (10). When had Moses given to Joshua any commandment of this kind? It appears to be a hasty and erroneous remark of the writer. — "The people encamped in Gilgal" (19). Gilgal, according to Josephus ("Antiquities," Lib. v. cap. 1, § 4, 11), was about six miles from Jericho.

† "Until *we* were passed over" (v. 1); some of the commentators argue, from the use of the first person in this narrative, that its author must have lived in the time of the invasion. But this is to lose sight of a perfectly well authorized form of speech, in the use of which a writer or speaker identifies himself with others belonging to the same community, whether political, religious, or having some other basis of union. No inhabitant of New England would hesitate to say, "*we* dispossessed the natives, and settled this region," though the event he speaks of took place many generations before his birth. No citizen of this country, satisfied of the perpetuity of its institutions, would fear being misunderstood, should he say, "*we* shall be a great people a century hence," though he does not expect to witness the condition of that time. "*We* proclaimed all men to be free and equal," "*we* shall, in some future age, cross the Atlantic in balloons," are unexceptionable forms of expression at this day. They are justified by the principles of all language, and not an idiom of one or more. But as to Jewish use, comp. Josh. xxii. 28; Judges ii. 1; Ps. lxi. 6; Hosea xii. 4.

‡ Josh. v. 1-9. The former name is injudiciously rendered into English in our version (3), disguising the purport of the passage.

of the Law,* is altogether insufficient. There can be no reasonable doubt, that the passovers, so recently and solemnly enjoined, had been kept during the forty years;† but they could not be kept except by circumcised men. Still more improbable is it, that Joshua should choose the time, when he had just invaded an enemy's country, and was surrounded on all sides by its forces, watching for an advantage, to require his whole army at once to disable themselves from resistance, should they be attacked.‡

The ordinance of circumcision having been thus observed, it is next related, that the Passover, for which it was a preparation, was kept "in the plains of Jericho," and that, after this festival, the supply of manna ceased, the people being thenceforward provided with food by products of their new home. § Yet that, before this, they had used other food besides manna, is distinctly implied in a preceding passage. || The chapter concludes with an account of the appearance of a warlike form to Joshua, which announces itself as prepared to lead the invading host to victory, and commands him to put off his shoes from his feet, in token of respect to the newly-found soil, which, being Jehovah's chosen abode, was holy like that spot, where, forty years before, Jehovah had revealed himself to Moses. ¶

* Comp. Ex. xii. 48.

† Comp. Numb. ix. 5, 9-13.

‡ With Josh. v. 7, 8, comp. Gen. xxxiv. 25.

§ Josh. v. 10-12; comp. Vol. I. p. 156.

|| "Prepare your *victuals*," Joshua had commanded in i. 11. But the Hebrew word is צִדָּה, which means *wild meat, game*, and cannot be understood to denote such a substance as manna.

¶ v. 13-15. The purport of the passage is not entirely clear, but I think we are to find an emphasis in the word *now* in the fourteenth verse. As if it were said; "I, who formerly appeared as teacher of the nation's lawgiver (comp. Ex. iii.), *now* appear in the different character

The miraculous capture of Jericho is the subject of the sixth chapter. The people were directed, we are told, to pass around its walls, in silent procession, for six successive days, while seven priests, accompanying the ark in the midst of the host, should blow a blast upon their trumpets. This done, on the seventh day the predicted catastrophe befell. Seven times, on that day, the mute multitude encircled the devoted city, and then, when at a signal they burst forth into a shout, the massy walls reeled and fell, and the besiegers passing, each man directly forward, over their ruins, proceeded utterly to destroy "all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword." Of its inhabitants they suffered none to live, except Rahab, who had protected the spies, and her household; and of its wealth they preserved nothing, except that "the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord." *

of guide to its military champion; and, as my presence formerly made Sinai holy (Ex. iii. 5), so now it sanctifies the spot where I take up my residence."

* "Trumpets of rams' horns" (Josh. vi. 4); the true translation probably is, *alarm-trumpets*. — "The walls of the city shall fall down flat" (5, comp. 20); but Rahab's house was upon the wall (ii. 15), and yet it stood (vi. 22, 23). The representations are not congruous. — "On that day they (that is, "the people," comp. 7, 10) compassed the city seven times" (vi. 15); but, although the city were small, the diameter of a circle, of which the array of such a multitude made the circumference, would have been so great, as to make it incredible, both in view of the time and of the strength necessary, that such a march should have been accomplished in one day. — "The *treasury* of the *house* of the Lord" (24); this name would have been proper before the tabernacle was built (Ex. xxiii. 8); and in Moses' time contributions were said to be brought "into the house of the Lord" (Deut. xxiii. 19). — "She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day" (25); that is, having been adopted into the family of Israel, she dwelleth there still in her posterity; comp. Ruth iv.

In the sack of Jericho, so proceeds the narrative, an Israelite had transgressed, in appropriating to himself a portion of the spoil. The consequence was, the divine displeasure, shown in permitting a shameful defeat of three thousand men, sent by Joshua to attack the town of Ai. That leader is overwhelmed with consternation at the news, and, prostrating himself before the ark to expostulate against this desertion of his people by Jehovah, is informed what a sin has been committed, and how the offender must be detected and punished. Proceeding according to these directions, Joshua traces the crime (apparently by the casting of lots), first to the tribe of Judah, then to the family of Zarhi, then to the household of Zabdi, and lastly to Achan, Zabdi's grandson, who, acknowledging his guilt, is forthwith put to death by stoning. The narrative serves the writer to explain, in connexion with the history of the invasion, the origin of a heap of stones which was extant in his time, and of the name of the valley in which it stood. The stones had been piled over Achan's body, and the valley was called Achor, or *trouble*, after him who there had troubled Israel.*

20-22; Mat. i. 5. The great attention paid to the case of Rahab, David's ancestor, favors the opinion, that the book was composed in David's reign, or, at least, after he had risen to eminence in that of Saul. — "Cursed be the man that riseth up and buildeth this city, Jericho," &c. (Josh. vi. 26). From this (comp. 1 Kings xvi. 34) it has been inferred, that Jericho was not rebuilt till Ahab's time. But see 2 Sam. x. 5; also Judges i. 16, iii. 13, compared with Deut. xxxiv. 3.

* Josh. vii. 1-26. — "Achan took of the accursed thing" (1); comp. vi. 18, 19. — "Ai, which is beside Bethaven" &c. (2); comp. Gen. xii. 8. — "Joshua rent his clothes," &c. (Josh. vii. 6-9). The most careless reader cannot fail to be struck with the extraordinary character of this account. The general of an army of six hundred thousand men is thrown into an agony of terror because a small detachment had been beaten, with the loss of thirty-six men (5), before a city containing twelve thousand inhabitants of both sexes (viii. 25, 26), against which he presently proceeded to form an ambush with nearly three times their

The divine favor thus propitiated, another expedition is set on foot against Ai, with a permission, however, to the people to enrich themselves with the spoil. Thirty thousand men are disposed in an ambush, in one place, and five thousand in another, while, with the remainder of his force, Joshua proceeds to an open attack. The assailing party make a feint of retreating, and the inhabitants being drawn from their fortifications in the heat of pursuit, the Israelites, who had lain concealed, enter and set fire to the city. The engagement ends with the massacre of all the inhabitants of Ai, and the capture and execution of its king, a statement which gives the writer occasion to explain the origin of "a great heap of stones," which, he says, "remaineth unto this day," as having been piled upon that monarch's body. The chapter ends with an account of Joshua's erecting, upon Mount Ebal, an altar of unhewn stones, sacrificing upon it burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, inscribing upon it "a copy of the Law of Moses," and observing all the ceremonies which Moses had directed should attend the taking formal possession of the country.*

number (viii. 3-12). — "He that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, *he and all that he hath*" (15, comp. 25). This writer has no consideration for human life. Treating of a remote period, he gives the reins to his imagination, as is not unusual in such cases, and does not fear, that he may awaken the incredulity of his readers, as he would if events near to his own time made his subject. We shall see yet stronger instances of this, further on. In the present instance, he forgets, that he represents God as directing a method of procedure forbidden in his Law by Moses; comp. Deut. xxiv. 16. — "The name of that place was called 'the valley of *Achor*'" (26). אָכָר, Achar, means, *he troubled*, and this is the reading of Achan's name in 1 Chron. ii. 7, as well as in Josephus and the Vatican copy of the Septuagint. Not improbably it was the original reading in this chapter; comp. Josh. vii. 25.

* Josh. vii. 1-35. — "Take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai" (1); that is, according to the writer's representation, *assail*, with a force of more than half a million of warriors, a city numbering

At the time of the composition of this book, certain persons, of Canaanitish origin, served in menial offices about the sanctuary of Jehovah.* An account of the fact existed, which, however improbable in its circumstances, the writer esteemed worthy of adoption, or, at least, of preservation. The inhabitants, it was said, of a certain Canaanitish city, named Gibeon, perceiving that, like the rest of the dwellers in the country, they were to be made the victims of an exterminating war, resorted to a stratagem to obtain a treaty obliging the conquerors to spare their lives. They sent a delegation

twelve thousand inhabitants, and, accordingly, from two to three thousand fighting men. — "When ye have taken the city, ye shall set the city on fire" (8); the city was to be set on fire, as soon as taken, as a signal to the main body of troops (comp. 21); but this is inconsistent with the representation (2), that the movable property was to be saved. — "They went to lie in ambush and abode between Bethel and Ai" (9); that is, thirty thousand men hid themselves, according to the record, on and about a frequented road between two neighbouring cities. Upon this Dathe well remarks (*ad loc.*) that he could not pass over the difficulty in silence, but would not pretend to explain an inexplicable thing. — "He took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city" (12); the alleged position of the five thousand, in this place, is the same as that of the thirty thousand above; they seem to be inconsistent accounts of the same transaction. — "Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear" &c. (26); this appears to be an imitation of the account, in Ex. xvii. 8-13, of Moses' proceeding during the battle with the Amalekites. — "Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal," &c. (Josh. viii. 30, 31). But Mount Ebal was many miles from Ai, with a chain of mountains, and an unconquered enemy, between. The writer, in his zeal to show, that Joshua promptly obeyed the direction in question, appears to have overlooked the necessary preparation of intervening events. — "He wrote there upon the stones a copy of the Law of Moses" (32); comp. Deut. xxvii. xxviii. with my remarks upon them in Vol. I. pp. 429-496. It is, perhaps, worthy of observation, that the writer does not appear to be able, in this case, to appeal, as is his practice, to an existing monument. He does not say, that Joshua's altar upon Mount Ebal "remaineth unto this day."

* "Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, even unto this day"; Josh. ix. 27.

to Joshua, alleging, and using artifices to persuade him, that they were no Canaanites, but citizens of a distant country, who, having heard of his exploits, were desirous of establishing friendly relations with him and his people. The deception, though suspected,* was carried through, and Joshua entered into the stipulations which they desired; stipulations which, even after discovering that they had been obtained on false pretences, he still felt bound to keep, though, indignant at the fraud, he condemned them, while he spared their lives, to laborious offices under the direction of the Levites. The scrupulosity of Joshua, in conceiving himself to be bound by a contract made under such circumstances, makes a scarcely more peculiar feature of the transaction, than his appointing his detested heathen slaves to a service about the sacred precincts of Jehovah's tabernacle. But the whole conception of the story, to one who does not ascribe to it a character of sacredness, will appear of the most puerile description.†

The league of the Gibeonites with Joshua gave offence to the confederacy from which they had withdrawn. An expedition being set on foot against them by five neighbouring princes, they had recourse to Joshua for protection. Encouraged by a promise of divine aid, he marched to Gibeon, and attacked and defeated the besiegers, upon whom also a hail-storm did execution, greater than was done in the battle. The approach of night threatening to suspend the

* Josh. ix. 7.

† ix. 1-27. If one might hazard a conjecture as to the true reason of certain Gibeonite servants having been employed about the tabernacle, it would be natural to find it in the fact, that, before David's time, the tabernacle had probably sometimes been stationed at Gibeon (comp. 1 Chronicles xxi. 29).

slaughter, the diurnal revolution of the earth upon its ~~axis~~ was arrested at Joshua's command, or, in the language of the record, "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." The writer appears to record this stupendous phenomenon as an actual occurrence, but he indicates the kind of authority which he had for his belief. "Is not this written," he says, "in the book of Jasher?" The book of Jasher, not extant, nor anywhere described in the later Scriptures, is believed to have been a collection of poems. In a bold use of the common resources of his art, the poet had probably represented the victory as so glorious, that the heavenly luminaries had seemed to pause in their course to look down upon it, or the slaughter of one day as being so terrible, that it might have been thought it was protracted to the length of two, to give the victors time for such a work of carnage; and the author of the book now before us, taking the representation for literal, and adopting it into his own work in plain narrative prose, has occasioned inextricable perplexity to writers, who have since proceeded to comment on it in his own punctilious spirit.*

* Josh. x. 1-14. — To the objections, which immediately occur to every mind, against understanding this as simple matter of fact, some others might be added, if it were desirable to swell the number. For instance, of what use could the moon's light be to the pursuing army, as long as the sun was above the horizon? And when a miracle had been wrought to give the Jews the daylight of two days continuously, was not another needed to give them strength to use the advantage, when they went into action, on the first day, after a weary night march (9) of nearly thirty miles, from Gilgal to Gibeon? But the truth is, it was the unreflecting and prosaic mind of the author of this book, which put such a bewildering interpretation upon an ancient writing. There is no evidence, that even his own early compatriots so understood it. In other parts of the Old Testament, where are enumerated the miracles with which Jehovah interposed for his people's deliverance, no hint is given

The five allied kings, in the dispersion of their forces, are related to have taken refuge in a cave, to the mouth of which Joshua, hearing of their concealment, commanded stones to be rolled to secure them, till he should have completed the rout of their followers. This done, they were brought out and put to death,

of this, the most amazing, if it actually occurred, of all; comp. Ps. lxxviii. 53-55; cxxxv. 8-12. The Prophet Habakkuk, alluding to the same course of events (Hab. iii. 11), uses similar language to that of the composition which the writer of Joshua quotes; but this too is in the midst of a passage in the boldest style of poetry, and it would be just as reasonable to interpret his words literally, when he speaks of lightning as "the light of God's arrows," and "the shining of his glittering spear," as to give such an exposition to what he says of the sun and moon in the context. The account which I have given above of the poet's meaning, where he spoke of the lingering of the heavenly bodies on their course, only supposes a not violent expansion of a not uncommon form of speech. "Moments would seem by thee a summer day," is the language of poetry, it is true; but we are speaking of poetry, which, if in another tongue, is of a yet bolder spirit; and, while I write, a story comes in my way, which contains the following expression; "The impatience need not be described; *hours were years, and a few leagues ten thousand miles.*" If the laws of modern English prose will tolerate this, I cannot think that I have proposed a rash exposition of a fragment of ancient Oriental poetry. — "Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" (Josh. x. 13.) A poem composed by David was also inserted in that book, (2 Sam. i. 18); and so, say some of the critics, the book of Joshua, referring to the contents of that of Jasher, must have been written, at least, as late as David's time. But the argument is of no value. The book of Jasher, from its probable etymology (from יָשָׁר, *he sang*), and from these two specimens of its contents, appears to have been a collection of poems. As such, it was likely to receive accessions from time to time, while it would be quoted, at its different stages, by the same name. So there was (at all events, there might have been, which is sufficient for our purpose) a book of Psalms from the time of David, who wrote a great part of the collection. But it did not reach its present state till several centuries later. So a book of Proverbs might have been quoted, by that name, by writers of any age between that of Solomon and that of Hezekiah. But not till the reign of the latter prince did our present book of Proverbs exist (see Prov. xxv. 1). — "There was no day like that before it or *after it*" (Josh. x. 14); the writer, who could use these words, did not intend to be understood as living near to the time of the event which he was recording.

and their bodies thrown back into their recent hiding-place; and some large stones, standing, in the writer's time, against the entrance to a cavern, are appealed to by him, after his characteristic manner, as a permanent monument of their fate.*

The king and inhabitants of Makkedah were the next victims to Joshua's system of exterminating warfare. "He utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he let none remain;" and most of the residue of the passage which makes the subject of this Lecture is employed in recounting a succession of such conquests so used. Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, Debir, and various other cities, of the southern region of Canaan, "from Kadesh-Barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen 'even unto Gibeon," one after another, fall before the arms of the unsparing victor, and are converted into heaps of bloody ashes.†

The tide of conquest next rolls northwards. By the shore of lake Merom, a great battle was fought against a new confederacy in that quarter, in which Joshua, as usual, triumphed. He followed up his successes as before, putting to death the inhabitants of the captured cities, and sharing the property among his troops, but burning only one of them, the rest being reserved for the future habitations of the conquerors. ‡ The writer

* Joshua x. 15-27. — "Joshua returned unto the camp to Gilgal" (15), at least a day's march distant; yet his victory, according to the following passage (19, 20), was still incomplete, and presently we find his camp again at Makkedah (21), and not until after several intervening transactions, transferred to Gilgal. The fifteenth verse appears to contradict the rest of the chapter, and it is natural to suppose it derived from a different source.

† x. 28-43. — "The country of Goshen" (41); not, of course, the Egyptian Goshen, but the confines of a city of that name, afterwards included within the bounds of the tribe of Judah; comp. xv. 51.

‡ xi. 1-23. — "Hazor only, that did Joshua burn" (Josh. xi. 13); re-

relieves the record of these events with very little variety of statement. He had taken up the idea, that Moses had doomed every Canaanite to death, and that Joshua intended to execute his will;* and, accordingly, his compendious account of the indiscriminating warfare is, "All the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe."† It is gratifying, however, to know, that this is a statement, which portions of the later history sufficiently contradict.

The twelfth chapter presents merely a summary view of the respective conquests of Moses and Joshua on the eastern and the western side of the Jordan, with a full list of the cities said to have been captured by the latter commander, amounting to thirty-one in number. This enumeration constituted a suitable preface to the account, which next succeeds, of the distribution of the conquered territory among the tribes.

specting the reason of this exception for Hazor, we have no information. — "From all the mountains of *Judah*, and from all the mountains of *Israel*" (21); this text is much relied on by critics, who maintain, that the book was compiled subsequently to the division of the Israelitish nation into two kingdoms in the time of Rehoboam. But the argument is altogether unsafe. Nothing is more natural, than that portions of one community, obtaining a separate political existence, should continue to be known by names of earlier origin and use. Texas bore, while a part of Mexico, the name which it still bears as an independent state. Should the Basque provinces ever be severed from Spain, it is likely that their name would survive the revolution. Long before the separation, the tribes of Judah and Joseph constituted two rival interests, and might easily give discriminating names to the portions of country which they respectively inhabited. Also, it would appear, that, in point of fact, the distinction was somehow recognised as early as the time of Saul; comp. 1 Sam. xi. 8; xv. 4.

* Josh. xi. 15.

† xi. 14.

LECTURE XXVII.

THE PARTITION OF CANAAN.

JOSHUA XIII. 1.—XXIV. 33.

SITUATION AND BOUNDARIES OF CANAAN.—NAMES AND POSITION OF ITS PRINCIPAL MOUNTAINS.—THE RIVER JORDAN, THE WATERS OF MEROM, THE LAKE OF GENNESARET, AND THE DEAD SEA.—PLAINS OF JORDAN AND ESDRAELON.—CLIMATE AND SOIL OF CANAAN, AND ITS CAPACITY OF SUSTAINING A LARGE POPULATION.—TERRITORY OF THE ISRAELITES ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE JORDAN.—FAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF THE ISRAELITES.—DIRECTION TO JOSHUA TO MAKE A PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY.—QUESTION RESPECTING THE METHOD OF ASSIGNING THE SEVERAL DISTRICTS.—APPROPRIATION OF LAND TO CALEB, —TO THE TRIBE OF JUDAH,—AND TO THE TRIBES OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH.—SURVEY OF THE RESIDUE OF THE COUNTRY.—APPROPRIATION OF LAND TO THE REMAINING TRIBES.—SELECTION OF SIX CITIES OF REFUGE.—ASSIGNMENT OF CITIES TO JOSHUA,—TO THE PRIESTS,—AND TO THE LEVITES.—ERECTION OF AN ALTAR BY THE THREE EASTERN TRIBES ON THE BANK OF THE JORDAN.—DISCOURSES OF JOSHUA TO THE PEOPLE,—AND RENEWAL, AT HIS INSTANCE, OF THEIR COVENANT TO SERVE JEHOVAH.—DEATH AND BURIAL OF JOSHUA.—BURIAL OF THE BONES OF JOSEPH.—DEATH AND BURIAL OF ELEAZAR.

THE Israelites had now gained possession of the territory formerly occupied by the patriarchs of their race. Before we proceed to observe how it was parcelled out among the several tribes, it will be convenient to consider the general features of its geography.

An ancient tradition had declared, that God had promised to Abraham, for his posterity, a country extending from the Mediterranean sea to the river Eu-

phrates;* and Moses had actually received an assurance, that, eventually, the possessions of his people, while embracing all this extent of territory from west to east, should reach to the Red Sea as their southern limit.† But these intimations were only prospective. Between the Red Sea and the southern border of Palestine was a region occupied by the Idumeans, or descendants of Esau, to which the Israelites originally laid no claim, ‡ though in the time of David it became theirs by the right of conquest. And the country along the eastern bank of the Jordan had neither been occupied by the ancestors of the race of Israel, nor been included within the divine promise of the land of Canaan. In the course of events it had fallen into their hands, before Moses' death, by the fortune of war.

The land of Canaan, properly so called, where the patriarchs had dwelt, and which their posterity, under Moses, were directed to repossess, is particularly described in connexion with the narrative of measures taken by him for the invasion. § It lay at the southeast corner of the Mediterranean sea, extending over somewhat less than one degree of longitude, and, as is generally thought, about two degrees and a half of latitude. || The eastern and western boundaries, viz. the river Jordan, with its lakes, on one side, and the Mediterranean Sea on the other, are definite throughout. ¶ As

* Gen. xv. 18.

† Ex. xxiii. 31.

‡ Deut. ii. 4, 5.

§ Numb. xxxiv. 1 - 13.

|| That is, from about 31° 10' to 33° 40' of north latitude, and from about 35° to 35° 50' of longitude east from Greenwich; the western boundary does not run along a meridian line, but inclines in a westerly direction from north to south.

¶ I speak of these boundaries as they were described and designed. It is true, however, that fortified cities along the coast, and their environs, held out against the Israelites through the whole period of their inde-

to the northern and southern, described as they are by means of the names of places which cannot now be identified, there is room for difference of opinion. The eastern *terminus* of the southern boundary is a fixed point, but it is uncertain what river was meant by the "River of Egypt," along which it was to run to its western extremity, while both the specified *termini* of the northern boundary are now unknown.* Michaelis, who assigns to the country, originally intended for the Israelites, a greater extent than any other writer with whom I am acquainted, believes it to have stretched from north to south over no less than eight degrees of latitude.†

The principal features of the country are, as we might expect, frequently brought to view in the writings of the Old Testament, whether as connected with history, or as affording topics of poetical illustration. Of the mountains, Carmel, Tabor, Lebanon, and Hermon are oftenest mentioned. Carmel is a ridge terminating in a promontory upon the Mediterranean (the only great promontory upon that coast), a few miles south of the thirty-third degree of latitude. Tabor is an insulated hill, about a mile high, situated twenty miles or more, in nearly an eastern direction, from Carmel, and somewhat less than the same distance west of the lake of Gennesaret. The mountains of Lebanon, consisting of two main ridges, called by the profane writers Libanus and Anti-Libanus, lie

pendent history. But it was somewhat as Gibraltar, or Algiers, in our time, belongs to one nation, while it falls within the natural limits of another, or as Hamburg or Lucca is a separate state, though surrounded by another's domain.

* See Vol. I. pp. 416, 417.

† Viz. from the 28th degree to the 36th. See "Mosaïsches Recht," B. ii. cap. 1, § 1.

in the northern region of the Holy Land, extending thence into Syria. Some of their summits are represented as being no less than eight or nine thousand feet in height. The range of Mount Hermon branches from them towards the east and south.

In the mountains of Lebanon, in about thirty-three degrees twenty minutes of north latitude, and thirty-five degrees forty minutes of east longitude, the river Jordan has its rise, and running south, and passing through, on its way, the Lakes Merom and Cinneroth, discharges itself into the Dead Sea at about a hundred miles' distance from its source, measured in a straight line, or a hundred and thirty miles, following the windings of the stream. The accounts given by travellers of its depth and width are very contradictory ;— a fact easily accounted for, from its having been visited by them at different seasons, when shrunk by the droughts of summer, or swelled by torrents from the hills in spring. Burckhardt says, that where he crossed it, a little below the sea of Gennesaret, it was "about eighty paces broad, and about three feet deep ; this, it must be recollected, was in the midst of summer."*

"The waters of Merom" (afterwards called Semechonitis), through which the Jordan passes ten or fifteen miles from its source, are rather a swamp or bog than a lake. The lake of Cinneroth (since named the Sea of Gennesaret, of Galilee, and of Tiberias), a few miles lower down, is a sheet of water twelve miles and a half long, and five miles broad. Its water is pure, and refreshing to the taste ; and it abounds in fish. The Dead Sea (otherwise called the Sea of Sodom, the Salt Sea, and the Lake Asphaltites), which receives the Jordan, has been commonly represented (after Josephus †) as about

* "Travels," p. 345.

† "De Bel. Jud." Lib. iv. cap. 8, § 4.

seventy miles long from north to south, and eighteen miles broad; but some recent travellers describe it as less than three quarters of this size. Various accounts, formerly given of the noxious qualities of its waters (so baleful, it was said, that birds fell lifeless in flying over them), are now known to be fabulous. They are, however, so salt, that fish cannot live in them; and the soil around is so impregnated with saline particles, as to be almost bare of vegetation. In modern times it has been a common opinion, that this lake had, anciently, an outlet into the Red Sea, through a great valley ("El Ghor"), known to extend in that direction; but more accurate recent observations have shown the levels to be so different, as to discredit that hypothesis. Quantities of asphaltum float upon its surface; hot springs are found upon its banks; and every thing betokens a volcanic region. In times when the phenomena of volcanoes were still less understood than now, such tracts have always been chosen by a gloomy imagination for the scenes of awful legends. Here, accordingly, were represented to have anciently stood the guilty cities, which God, — his patience exhausted by their crimes, — destroyed by "fire and brimstone from heaven," and caused a sea of turbid water to roll in, and cover their remains.*

The position of the "plain of Jordan" is sufficiently indicated by its name. The rich plain of Esdraelon, the scene of some of the most famous military operations in Judea, in ancient and modern times, extends

* Gen. xix. 1–30. — A writer, whose judgment deserves the greatest confidence on such a subject, Dr. Daubeny ("Description of Volcanoes," pp. 278, *et seq.*), expresses the opinion, that there has been volcanic action in this region at periods within the limits of authentic history. He says, that even now "clouds of smoke are often observed to issue from the Lake, and new crevices to be formed on its banks" (*ibid.* p. 281).

from Mount Carmel to the Jordan with a width, from north to south, of about twenty miles.

The temperature, in the plains of Palestine, commonly ranges, in the year, between the extremes of forty degrees in January, and ninety-two degrees in June. By reason of the uneven surface of the country, the changes from heat to cold are sometimes sudden and great.

To undertake to compare together the various testimonies, ancient and modern, respecting the fertility of the Holy Land, would be to engage in a discussion of great extent. I may, without fear of contradiction, state it as a result of the whole, that, while parts of the region were barren, the greater portion of it was capable, under skilful cultivation, of an exuberant fruitfulness.* Even the rough sides of the mountains, which would produce little spontaneously, offered great advantages for the culture of one of the chief products of the country; and the existing remains of terraces, built of the fallen stones, and covered with earth for

* There are no better ancient profane authorities to the point, than Tacitus and Josephus. "Uber solum; fruges nostrum ad morem," says the former writer ("Hist" Lib. v. cap. 6). For Josephus's favorable account, see "De Bello Judaico," Lib. iii. cap. 3. Strabo, whose testimony among ancient writers is chiefly relied on for the contrary view, ("Geog." Lib. xvi. cap. 2, § 36,) was never in the country, and he, on the other hand, testifies to the great fertility of some parts of the region, (*ibid.* § 16, 41). Among moderns, Dr. Shaw's statements respecting its great fruitfulness are very express; see "Travels," pp. 365, 366. — Says Malte-Brun ("Universal Geography," Vol. II. pp. 148–151, Boston Edit.) "Galilee would be a paradise, were it inhabited by an industrious people under an enlightened government. . . . The accounts given by the ancients of the fertility of Judea, are not in the least degree falsified by the present state of things. . . . In places subjected to irrigation, the same field, after a crop of wheat in May, produces pulse in autumn. Several of the fruit trees are continually bearing flowers and fruit at the same time, in all their stages."

the growth of the vine, attest how carefully these advantages were employed.*

It has been alleged, that the territory of Palestine was insufficient to sustain a population like that which Moses proposed to settle in it, consisting of three millions of persons; and we are not at liberty to say, in reply, that two tribes and a half, out of the twelve, were established beyond the limits of this region, because, though this was the fact, it was a departure from the original design. But the objection here implied to the credibility of the Mosaic record cannot be maintained. Assuming the narrowest supposable limits, Palestine, extending in length a hundred and seventy-five miles, with a mean breadth of fifty, contained eight thousand seven hundred and fifty square miles. To find room for the population in question within it, it is accordingly necessary to assign three hundred and forty inhabitants to the square mile; a very dense population, no doubt; but not incredible for a fertile country, where all the citizens were cultivators, and where nearly all the produce of the ground would be put to the use of food for man.† Not to speak of the compact population, at the present day, of some of the eastern countries, that of the kingdom of Saxony is reckoned at two hundred and ninety-three to the square mile, and that of Belgium at three hundred and forty-seven. And this circumstance of the social position of the Jews favored the policy of the Law, so far as it aimed to train the citizens to habits of thrift and industry, and to bring them into close relations to one another.

The country on the east side of the Jordan, assigned

* See Maundrell's "Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem," 6th edit. pp. 65, 66. In connexion with the subject of this paragraph, see Deut. viii. 7-9.

† See Vol. I. p. 303, note.

to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and to half of the tribe of Manasseh, was of a different character, and is expressly said to have been chosen by those communities as being suitable for their occupation (which was that of shepherds and herdsmen), rather than for the purposes of agriculture.* It is but little known to modern explorers, but is believed to be in great part a sterile country, containing, however, numerous separate tracts suitable for pasturage. The boundary, on this side, is not well defined. Indeed, it is matter of probable inference, that the country towards the Euphrates was of so little value, as not to be claimed by any people as their permanent dwelling-place; so that the eastern tribes, in their nomadic excursions, might at will extend their wanderings to that river. The distance from the Jordan to the Euphrates is about five hundred miles.

Before leaving this subject, I would remark, in a word, on two characteristics of the country chosen for the abode of the children of Israel; its fitness to afford security to its inhabitants, and to promote the great purpose for which they were set apart from the rest of the world, the preservation and ultimate diffusion of a true theology. As to the first point, Judea was encompassed, on all sides, by the best natural defences against an invader. On the north side was a lofty chain of mountains; on the west a sea, with no harbour upon it, capable of sheltering a large fleet; on the south, a desert country; and on the east a line of river and lakes, with a region beyond them affording the scantiest supplies for the march of a hostile force. Thus protected against enemies, it lay, however, across the great thoroughfare of peaceful intercourse between

* See Numbers xxxii. 1 - 5.

the three continents of the ancient world. The caravans of Asia and Africa passed by it on their way to and from those continents and Europe; and, through the ports of the Red Sea on one side, and of the Mediterranean on the other, it was in the line of communication between the most distant regions of the earth. Though its own pursuits were not commercial, still, placed as it was in the track of all the commerce of the trafficking nations, the faith which it held was effectually published abroad through the whole course of its history, and preparation was thus made, through a series of ages, for the office which it was ultimately to discharge in the regeneration of mankind.

We read, at the beginning of the book before us, of Joshua's receiving, in his old age, a divine direction to proceed to a division of this territory, to take effect immediately, as to some parts of it, and prospectively as to others, which are specified as remaining still unconquered.* At the same time, to make the topographical description complete, the boundaries of the settlements, assigned by Moses to three tribes on the east side of the river, are recited at length.† The tribe of Reuben occupied the southerly portion of the eastern district; the lands of Gad lay contiguous, to the north; and still further north, extending to the hills of Hermon, was the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh.

A question of some interest occurs respecting the manner of the distribution of the conquered country among the tribes. This is commonly understood to have been by the arbitration of *the lot*; that is, a dis-

* Josh. xiii. 1-7. — "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed" (1); this was true in point of fact, as the later history shows, but it contradicts xi. 23, where it is said, "So Joshua took the whole land."

† xiii. 8-33; compare Numb. xxii. 33-42; Deut. iii. 8-17.

tribution is understood to have been made apparently under the dictation of chance, but really under that of a special Providence.

That the writer of the book so understood it, I have no occasion to deny, entertaining the opinion which I have expressed respecting his authority as an historian. Still I do not think, that his language requires to be so interpreted;* nor can it be, without encountering some serious difficulties. To put such an interpretation upon it, is to understand the writer as representing the distribution to the tribes west of the river, to have been made in a different manner from that to the two tribes and a half in the eastern district, in respect to whom we do not read, that Moses had recourse to any such method.† Again; though “the *lot* of the tribe of the children of Judah” is spoken of as distinctly as that of any other portion of the nation, we are immediately before told, that a tract which necessarily lay within its borders, the property of Caleb, one of its number, was assigned to him agreeably to his own express designation and request.‡ It would have been impossible to appropriate a tract to Caleb, while the question respecting the place of settlement of his tribe remained to be determined by a casting of lots. Further; Moses had directed the distribution to be made by a commission consisting, besides Eleazar and Joshua, of “one prince of every tribe,” § an arrangement recognised in the account of it in Joshua. || Once more;

* “Divide thou it by lot,” is the language of our version in Joshua xiii. 6; but the single word, so rendered, is *הקלה*, literally, *let it fall*, i. e. assign it. It is true, that the word *גורל* is often used in this connexion; but there is no doubt of its having the same extent of meaning as the English word *allotment*, and being capable, like that, of being used for a deliberate appropriation. See Vol. I. p. 392, note.

† Numb. xxxii. 33–42; Deut. iii. 12–17. ‡ Josh. xiv. 6–15.

§ Numb. xxxiv. 16–29.

|| Josh. xiv. 1.

when the partition came to be made, the order of succession of the possessions of the several tribes, viewing them from south to north, was almost exactly the same with that of the names of their several princes in the list of Moses ; * and the arrangement was, in some remarkable particulars, precisely that, which we might have expected would be dictated by considerations of policy. First, we find Judah, the most powerful tribe, provided for ; † then Ephraim, the principal branch of the rival family ; ‡ next (as if sufficient precedence had already been accorded to Judah), Manasseh and Benjamin, the tribes which may be not unfitly termed the retainers of Ephraim ; § after them, the retainers of Judah, viz. Zebulun and Issachar, || which had constituted part of the camp of Judah in the wilderness, ¶ and Simeon,** of the same parentage with Judah, and already severed from the former connexion with Reuben and Gad, †† in consequence of the settlement of those tribes on the eastern side of the river ; and, lastly, the tribes of Asher, Naphtali, and Dan, ‡‡ which also had marched under one standard through the wilderness. §§ There is nothing, in this arrangement, which has the appearance of such fortuitous direction as the lot, not providentially controlled, would be expected to give ; nor, on the whole, is it likely, that the writer meant to represent a partition, which the tribes and their rulers would, for prudential reasons, so naturally have pitched upon, as being determined by the lot under a special divine superintendence.

The first appropriation of land within the limits of

* See Vol. I. p. 417, note ††. The only exceptions to this are, that in the territorial arrangement, as compared with the catalogue of the princes, Manasseh is interchanged with Ephraim, and Zebulun with Issachar.

† Josh. xv. 1 – 12. ‡ xvi. 1 – 10. § xvii. 1 – 12 ; xviii. 11 – 28.

|| xix. 10 – 23. ¶ Numb. ii. 5 – 9. ** Josh. xix. 1 – 9.

†† Numb. ii. 10 – 16. ‡‡ Josh. xix. 24 – 48. §§ Numb. ii. 25 – 31.

Canaan proper, was to Caleb, who, nearly fifty years before, had been one of the associates of Joshua, in the office of exploring the southern quarter of the country, and who was the only person, except the present leader of the people, that had acquitted himself honorably, of the twelve, who had been sent upon that errand. Caleb is now related to have presented himself before Joshua, reminding him of the promise, which on that occasion, had been made to him by Moses, and soliciting its fulfilment. His application was favorably listened to. "Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance."*

The fifteenth chapter contains a description of the boundaries, and an enumeration of the cities, of the territory assigned to the tribe of Judah, which, according to the original arrangement, was to occupy the whole southern district, extending east and west from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, and as far north as to the city of Jerusalem.† The sixteenth and seventeenth chapters describe in like manner, but much more briefly, the possessions of the two branches of the posterity

* Josh. xiv. 1-15. — "The children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal" &c. (6); the fact of Caleb's being thus accompanied by his tribe, implies the interest which they felt in the success of his suit, on account of the relation which it had to the place of settlement of them all. — With 9, comp. Numb. xiv. 6-9, 24. — "Now therefore give me this mountain," &c. (Josh. xiv. 12, comp. 13); Caleb here is made to express his hope, that he shall be able to dispossess the present inhabitants of Hebron; but this Joshua is said to have already done; comp. x. 36, 37; xi. 21. — With 15 comp. Gen. xiii. 18, and xxiii. 2. Hebron, about fifteen miles west of the centre of the Dead Sea, is still one of the principal towns of the Holy Land.

† Josh. xv. 13, is but a repetition of xiv. 14, 15; and xv. 15-17, contains a contradiction of x. 38, 39. — From xv. 63, an argument is drawn (see above, p. 144), to prove this book to have been written before the eighth year of the reign of David. De Wette, on the contrary ("Beiträge zur Einleitung in das A. T.," Band 1, s. 139), argues from it in favor of a later date, because, says he, the city was never called by the name of *Jerusalem*, which the writer gives it, till after David expelled

of Joseph. They were to occupy the whole breadth of the country, from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, immediately north of Judah, Ephraim being settled in the more southerly portion. The proposed extent of the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh towards the north cannot now be determined. The writer describes the northern boundary by reference to the limits of other tribes; which limits, according to his own account, had not yet been designated.*

These first distributions made, it appears to have been thought necessary, before proceeding further, to obtain a better knowledge of the extent of the territory which remained to be divided; and, to this end, Joshua is said to have proposed to the tribes (who were assembled at Shiloh to set up there the tabernacle, the seat of national worship), that a commission, consisting of three men from each, should make a thorough survey of the country, to be the basis of further arrangements. This being done accordingly, it was made evident, that the assignments of territory to Judah and

the Jebusites from it. To prove this, he appeals to 1 Chron. xi. 4, 5; but nothing can be gathered from that text, except that, at the time of its writer, the city was known to bear, or to have borne, at the same time, or at different times, two different names. So far is it from indicating or implying the time at which one succeeded to the other, that it does not so much as imply the fact itself. As well might we undertake to conclude from Josh. xviii. 13, that, at the period there spoken of, the name *Luz* succeeded to that of *Bethel*; but we read elsewhere (Judges i. 23), that the opposite was the truth. Further, in Joshua x. 1, we seem to read of Jerusalem as a Canaanitish name; and if David had given it, it would have been as natural for the writer of the Chronicles to record that fact, as to tell us (what he does tell, in 1 Chron. xi. 7), that, in consequence of David's conquest, the hill of Zion took a new designation.

* Josh. xvi. 10, contradicts x. 33. — With xvii. 2, comp. Numb. xxvii. 30–32. The names correspond, except that *Abiezer*, in the former list, occupies the same place with *Jeezer* in the latter; but in Numbers the persons named are said to be children of Gilead, grandson of Manasseh, while in *Judges* (comp. xvii. 1) they appear to be represented as Manasseh's own children. — With Josh. xvii. 3, 4, comp. Numb. xxvii. 1–9.

Joshua

Joseph had been more liberal than a proper provision for the accommodation of the other tribes would admit ; and the first measure adopted, in consequence, was, to take from the lands of the tribe of Ephraim a portion, in the southeast quarter, for that of Benjamin, and, from those of Judah, the western portion for Simeon. To Zebulun a tract was next assigned north of Manasseh, embracing the plain of Esdraelon, and extending across the whole width of the country ; and between Zebulun and Manasseh was the district of Issachar, bounded by the Jordan to the east, but not reaching the whole distance to the Mediterranean. To Asher * and Naphtali,† — the former towards the west, but separated from the sea, along the greater part of its frontier, by the Philistine cities, — the latter towards the east, along the Jordan, — was assigned the more northerly mountainous region. Lastly, for the only remaining tribe, Dan, another portion was withdrawn, along the sea, from the first large appropriations to Judah and Ephraim. It is impossible, at this day, to point out with accuracy the boundaries of the tribes, so much use is made, in the description, of the names of ancient cities, whose site is now unknown. But for all purposes, for which it is material to us to be acquainted with the position of the several districts, it is sufficiently well ascertained.

* In the description of the boundaries of this tribe, "the strong city, Tyre," is one of the landmarks (Josh. xix. 29). But, according to Josephus ("Antiq." lib. 8, cap. 3, § 1), this city was not built till two hundred and forty years before the foundation of the Temple ; that is, two hundred years after the invasion of Canaan. Accordingly, thus late, at least, must the writer, who mentions it, have lived, even if we do not understand him to have supposed Tyre to be in existence before the boundary lines were marked.

† "Judah upon Jordan" (Josh. xix. 34) is probably an erroneous reading, the district of Judah being remote from that of Naphtali. The word is wanting in some of the versions.

An estate having been assigned by the people to Joshua within the limits of his own tribe,* he is next related to have received a divine direction to designate six cities, agreeably to the institution of Moses, to serve as asylums in cases of involuntary homicide. The names of the three cities, chosen for this purpose, on the east side of the Jordan, immediately after the conquest of that country, are repeated, but without any reference to their original selection by Moses; of the three, pitched upon in Canaan proper, one was in the centre of that territory, one in the northern extremity, in the district of Naphtali, and one near to the southern border, in Judah.† This distribution of them over the country, at a distance from each other, was a circumstance of obvious conformity to the design of the institution.

It remained to assign habitations to the sacerdotal tribe of Levi, for which the arrangement of the Law had been, that it should have no share in the territorial distribution, but should occupy cities with only a small tract of land adjoining each, for the purpose of cultivation.‡ Moses had distinctly implied, that the Levitical cities were to be scattered over the whole country.§ This was a feature of the arrangement, of great political importance, independently of its convenience in respect to an execution by the Levites of their various definite trusts.|| The tribes were, in an important sense, independent communities, with separate interests and mutual rivalries. There needed some bond

* Josh. xix. 49–51. — “*According to the word of the Lord, they gave him the city*” &c. (50). We are told (Numb. xiv. 24) of lands having been divinely promised to Caleb, but we read nothing of the kind in relation to Joshua.

† Josh. xx. 1–9. — With 2. comp. xxi. 13; Numb. xxxv. 9–30; Deut. xix. 1–10. — With Josh. xx. 8 comp. Deut. iv. 41–43.

‡ Numb. xxxv. 1–8. § xxxv. 8. || See Vol. I. pp. 319–322.

of union, such as the Levitical order supplied. Present, by its several settlements, in every neighbourhood throughout the country, it was everywhere a vigorous agent of consolidation. The Levitical communities, composed of comparatively enlightened men, constantly in communication with the central place of national worship, having advantages for understanding the national policy, and attached to the existing constitution of religion and government by reason of the advantages which it secured to them, were the conservative element in the Jewish state.*

An account of the appropriation of certain cities to the Levitical tribe, to the number of forty-eight (the number specified by Moses), is contained in the twenty-first chapter of Joshua. It may be presumed, that the enumeration is, for the most part, correct, as, considering the nature of these possessions, they would be likely to remain the same, at the time of this writer, as when originally acquired. Upon the principle of the distribution we have little light. We remark, however, that that branch of the Levitical order, which had precedence from the first,† viz., the family of Kohath, is now said to acquire twenty-three cities out of the forty-eight, and that these belong to the southern tribes, Judah, Simeon, Dan, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh; that the Gershonites, the next most honorable division,‡ are settled in the northern region, on both sides of the river; while to the Merarites are given eight cities in the remote districts of Reuben and Gad,

* Moses had nowhere directed, that the cities of refuge should be Levitical cities. Such, however, according to this record, was, in every instance, the arrangement; and doubtless there was a fitness in placing the privileges of asylum under the intelligent and responsible watch of the sacerdotal tribe.

† See Numb. iv. 4-15.

‡ iv. 21-28.

and four in that of Zebulun, in the centre of the country. Thus different portions of both the Gershonites and Merarites are separated from one another; while, beside the other points of advantage which have been mentioned, the Kohathites, in their neighbouring settlements, make a compact community. But what public objects were thus intended to be served, is an inquiry which could now terminate in nothing better than conjecture.

Moses had not so much as said any thing of arranging the cities of the tribe of Levi, in such a manner as that members of the three great families of that tribe should have cities of their own, and those in each other's vicinity. Still less had he directed, that the order of priests should have dwellings distinct from those of the rest of the family of Kohath, to which they belonged. But a remarkable feature of the distribution, as now described to have taken place, is, that, of the twenty-three Kohathite cities, thirteen (within the districts of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin) were assigned to the sacerdotal race, consisting, at this time, of only Eleazar and Ithamar, with their two households; while for the whole residue of the posterity of Kohath, numbering, in the wilderness, no less than eight thousand six hundred males,* such inferior accommodations were provided, as twelve cities would afford. I cannot but look upon this statement as one of the great blemishes of this book, regarded as an historical authority. It is common to say, that the arrangement was made in anticipation of the time when the sacerdotal family would be numerous; but this is to suppose it to have been anticipated, that, within some period to which the arrangement was to

* Numb. iii. 28.

relate, the descendants from two men would rise to something like an equality in number to the descendants of eight or nine thousand. The fact I take to have been, that, in the lapse of about four hundred years between the time of the settlement and the time of this writer, the family of Aaron, availing itself of its advantages of rank and wealth, had established an ascendancy in more than half of the cities assigned to the Kohathite race; and that, by a mere anachronism, the state of things existing in the age of Saul or David is referred to the original establishment.*

A narrative of special interest, and probable in most of its details, occupies the twenty-second chapter. The three eastern tribes, having fulfilled their engagement with Moses to assist in the conquest of Canaan, are dismissed to their homes, with a blessing from Joshua, and a charge to keep their allegiance to Jehovah.† When they come to the bank of the Jordan, and, passing it, are about to leave the country which had been possessed by the fathers of their race, and designated by divine promises as its permanent possession, a natural feeling of solicitude arises, lest, separated from their brethren, it should, at some time, be forgotten, that they make part of the same nation with them, worshippers with them of the One True God, and sharers in the blessings assured by him to his chosen people. To keep up, in all future time, the memory of a relation so valued by them, they resolve to erect an altar by the bank of the dividing river. Intelligence of the transaction being conveyed to the other tribes, they, unin-

* From the expression, "Shiloh, in the land of Canaan" (Josh. xxi. 2; comp. xxii. 9-32), it has been inferred, that the writer lived east of the river, and not in Canaan proper. This may well have been the fact, but the argument is not cogent.

† xxii. 1-9.

formed of its intent, are filled with concern, lest an apostasy from the national union and a desertion of the national worship, now at last happily established through so many sufferings, should be designed; and, under the first impulse of alarm and indignation, they organize a force to punish the supposed disloyalty. First, however, they send an embassy, composed of the son of the high priest, and of a prince from each of their tribes, to expostulate concerning the supposed offensive act; to intreat their brethren, if they have imagined, that separation from Canaan implies separation from its patron God, to withdraw from their lately chosen home, and come and find one with themselves upon his soil, and around his tabernacle; and to remind them, how reasonably the offence might give alarm, as exposing the whole nation to the displeasure of him, who, in the wilderness, had taken such signal vengeance on the people's sin, and who, but lately, had so grievously afflicted the whole for the guilt of one transgressor.* The devout and affectionate explanation of the purpose of the act at once removes all discontent, and the parties separate with renewed confidence in each other, and a confirmed prospect of permanent union.

If the writer lived at the age which I have supposed, it is natural to understand him as having taken a pecu-

* Josh. xxii. 10–20. — Respecting the meaning of the words, “from which we are not cleansed until this day” (17. comp. Numb. xxv. 1–9), the commentators express a variety of opinions. I understand the ambassadors to be simply represented as saying, that, notwithstanding God had anciently punished with such severity an affront offered to his authority, it would seem, from the present proceeding of the eastern tribes, that the nation was not, even yet, altogether free from the same sin. — With Josh. xxii. 20, comp. vii. 1–5. — In 34, the word *Ed* [עֵד, *witness*], which the sense requires, is wanting in the Hebrew. It is supplied on the authority of the Chaldee, Syriac, and Vulgate versions.

liar interest in the recital of this history. In the first years of David's reign, there was danger of a permanent disunion of the tribes, a danger which was renewed and realized in that of his grandson. For seven years and more after David had been acknowledged king by his own tribe, the rest of the nation still adhered to the house of Saul. Distressed by the view and the apprehension of such feuds, a patriotic mind might well have satisfaction in pointing to that past happy time, when the thought of any thing being done to divide the united race of Israel had excited the greatest consternation, on the part of those who suspected the wrong, and the liveliest anxiety to disclaim any such purpose, on the part of those who had fallen under the suspicion.

Towards the close of the book, Joshua, arrived at old age, is represented as having addressed the representatives of the people* in two discourses, which, though much more brief, are evidently modelled upon those of Moses at the beginning and near the end of the book of Deuteronomy.† Of the place, where the first was held, we are not informed. Its topics are, a reference to the victories which God had enabled his people to win; ‡ a promise of the continuance of his aid to complete the conquest of the country; § an exhortation to a punctilious observance of the Law of Moses, especially of its demand of homage for Jehovah alone, an observance in the rendering of which they would find the principle of security and greatness; || and

* "Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers" (Josh. xxiii. 2); for a comment upon this language, see Vol. I. p. 165.

† With Josh. xxiii. 1—xxiv. 27, comp. Deut. i. 1—xi. 32; xxix. 1—xxxi. 29.

‡ Josh. xxiii. 3, 4.

§ xxiii. 5.

|| xxiii. 6—11.

a warning, that, faithful as their God had been to fulfill all his promises for their good, he would be no less true to his word in destroying them as he had destroyed their enemies, should they suffer themselves to be withdrawn, by their idolatrous neighbours, from his service.*

On the second occasion, Joshua is represented to have convened the representatives of the tribes at Shechem.† There he is said to have addressed them with a recital of the goodness in which God had appeared to them and to their fathers,‡ and with exhortations to an

* Josh. xxiii. 12–16.

† xxiv. 1. Why at Shechem (the reader naturally asks) and not at Timnath-serah, his own home, particularly as he was near his end, or else at Shiloh, the place (twelve miles from Shechem) where the tabernacle had been set up, and where, accordingly, a former convocation had been held (xviii. 1, 10; xix. 51)? And the perplexity is increased, when we read, that “the people presented themselves [at Shechem] *before God*” (that is, according to the specific sense of that phrase, at the place of God’s worship), and, still more particularly (xxiv. 26), that the pillar, which Joshua erected on that occasion, was “set up by the sanctuary of the Lord.” The Septuagint translators saw the difficulty, and for *Shechem* they read *Shiloh*; at least such is the reading of the best copies. On the other hand, the commentators, by way of explanation, say, 1. that as Shechem was a Levitical city, it might have been preferred by Joshua to his own home as the scene of this solemn convocation, and that he might be able to journey thither, though not to Shiloh; 2. that it might have been selected, as being the scene (Gen. xii. 6, 7) of the original promise made to Abraham, and of his first worship in Canaan; and 3. that the tribes might now have been convened at Shechem in order to a solemn burial (Josh. xxiv. 32) of the body of Joseph in his father’s tomb. But I take the true explanation of the fact to be found in allowing an inconsistency between the representation in xxiv. 1 and that in xviii. 1. They are different authorities introduced into the same collection. And in the spirit of this remark I suggest further, that the twenty-third chapter and the first three quarters of the twenty-fourth, would be not unreasonably regarded as only different accounts of the last discourse of Joshua to his compatriots before his death. At least, the transition from the one to the other is exceedingly abrupt, and such as little favors the idea of their having originally made parts of a continuous narrative.

‡ Josh. xxiv. 2–13. — “I sent *the hornet* before you” (12); for a comment on this, see Vol. I. p. 182, note.

immovable adherence to their duty to him ; * and to have caused them to enter into a solemn covenant,† the terms of which he recorded in writing, erecting, at the same time, a stone pillar, to commemorate the transaction in all coming time.‡ This done, he is said to have dismissed the people, and, dying at the age of a hundred and ten years, to have been buried on his own estate within the district of his tribe. §

The book concludes with recording the faithfulness of the people to their religious obligations during “all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that over-lived Joshua ;” the interment of the bones of Joseph, which, according to his dying command, had been brought out of Egypt ; and the death and burial of Eleazar the High Priest. ||

The book of Joshua is not mentioned or quoted in the New Testament. Events related in it are referred to by Stephen in his defence before the council,¶ and by the writers of the Epistle to the Hebrews ** and of the Epistle of James.††

* Josh. xxiv. 14, 15.

† xxiv. 16 – 25.

‡ xxiv. 26, 27.

§ xxiv. 28 – 30. — “Being an hundred and ten years old” (29) ; if no certain account of Joshua’s age had been preserved, tradition would naturally enough fix upon the same for him, which had before been ascribed to his great progenitor ; comp. Gen. i. 26.

|| Josh. xxiv. 31 – 33. — “Israel served the Lord all the days of the elders that over-lived Joshua” (31) ; the author of these words could not have been Joshua’s contemporary, nor have lived very near to his time.

¶ Acts vii. 45.

** Hebrews xi. 30, 31.

†† James ii. 25.

LECTURE XXVIII.

TIME OF THE JUDGES.

JUDGES I. 1.—RUTH IV. 22.

SUBJECT AND NAME OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.—ITS CONTENTS.—
CONDUCT OF THE TRIBES TOWARDS THE CANAANITES, AFTER THE
DEATH OF JOSHUA.—ANNUNCIATION TO THEM OF THE DIVINE
DISPLEASURE.—GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE COURSE OF OF-
FENCES, PUNISHMENTS, AND DELIVERANCES.—MESOPOTAMIAN CAP-
TIVITY, AND JUDGESHIP OF OTHNIEL.—MOABITISH CAPTIVITY,
AND EMANCIPATION UNDER EHUD.—SLAUGHTER OF PHILISTINES
BY SHAMGAR.—CANAANITISH CAPTIVITY, AND EMANCIPATION UN-
DER DEBORAH AND BARAK.—MIDIANITISH CAPTIVITY.—LIFE
AND EXPLOITS OF GIDEON.—HIS FEUD WITH THE EPHRAIMITES.
—CONSPIRACY AND FATE OF ABIMELECH, AND PARABLE OF JO-
THAM.—ADMINISTRATIONS OF TOLA AND JAIR.—INVASION OF
THE AMMONITES.—LIFE, VOW, AND VICTORY OF JEPHTHAH.—
HIS MASSACRE OF THE EPHRAIMITES.—ADMINISTRATIONS OF IB-
ZAN, ELON, AND ABDON.—ADVENTURES OF SAMSON.—ACCOUNT
OF THE IDOL OF MICAH,—OF HIS CONTRACT WITH A LEVITE,—AND
OF THE MIGRATION OF A PORTION OF THE DANITES.—ACCOUNT
OF AN OUTRAGE COMMITTED IN A BENJAMITE CITY,—OF THE CIVIL
WAR WHICH ENSUED,—AND OF MEASURES ADOPTED TO PERPETUATE
THE DIMINISHED TRIBE OF BENJAMIN — BOOK OF RUTH, RECKONED
BY JEROME AMONG THE “EARLY PROPHETS.”—ITS CONTENTS.—
TIME OF ITS COMPOSITION.—QUESTION RESPECTING ITS HISTORI-
CAL AUTHORITY.

THE seventh book in the Old Testament collection,—that denominated the book of Judges,—professes to treat of the history of the Jewish people during the period which elapsed between the conquest and settlement of Canaan under Joshua, and the time of Eli and Samuel, which immediately preceded that of the establishment of the monarchy. The book takes

its name from the office of those eminent persons, whose deeds it records. Our translation of the name, however, is liable to convey an erroneous impression of the character which they sustained. They were not *judges*, according to our acceptance of the term;—that is, they were not administrators of law, or, at all events, that was not their distinctive trust. According to the representation in the history, they were military leaders, raised up by Providence, from time to time, to rescue the nation from the yoke of foreign oppressors.

The book opens with an account of the course pursued, by several of the tribes, towards the native inhabitants, after the death of Joshua. Of the tribes west of the river, eight are specified, which did not expel the Canaanites from their territory.* The result of this mistaken clemency is related to have been predicted by “an angel of the Lord” to a convocation of the Israelites, at a place which took the name *Bochim* [weeping], from the distress occasioned by his communication.† The event, after the death of the generation contemporary with Joshua, fulfilled the angel’s words. “The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger; and they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ash-taroath.”‡ The consequence was, that Jehovah, as he had foretold through Moses, proceeded to punish them by the hand of foreign tyrants. “He delivered them into the hand of spoilers that spoiled them, so that they could not any longer stand before their ene-

* Judges i. 1–36.

† ii. 1–5.

‡ ii. 6–13.

mies." Compassionating, however, their distressed condition, the Lord, from time to time, "raised them up judges, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judges." At last, indignant at seeing how constantly, after a succession of punishment and relief, they fell back into their former course of apostasy, he is said to have declared, "I will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died, that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord, to walk therein." *

The writer appears to have thus announced the theme, which the chief part of his book was intended to illustrate. At least, the contents of the first sixteen chapters principally relate to subjugations of the Jews by foreign powers in consequence of their desertions of Jehovah, and to his successive interpositions in their behalf.

First, their country, it is said, was overrun by Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia. He oppressed them for a term of eight years, at the end of which God listened to their prayers, and raised them up a deliverer in the person of Othniel, brother of Caleb.†

Forty years of quiet succeeded. A similar offence then provoked a similar retribution, of which Eglon, king of Moab, was made the instrument. His sway continued eighteen years, at the end of which time he was assassinated by one Ehud of the tribe of Benjamin, who, placing himself at the head of the people, again secured their freedom, and "the land had rest fourscore years. ‡

* Judges ii. 14-23; comp. Ex. xxiii. 20-33; Lev. xxvi. 14-39; Deut. xxviii. 15-68.

† Judges iii. 1-10.

‡ iii. 11-30.

The record of the next revolution is more brief. After Ehud "was Shamgar, the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad; and he also delivered Israel." *

"The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead, and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor. He had nine hundred chariots of iron, and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." Deborah, "the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time." She summoned Barak, of the tribe of Naphtali, to meet her at Mount Tabor with ten thousand men. Sisera, Jabin's commander, encountering this force with his master's nine hundred chariots and "all the people that were with him," suffered a signal defeat, and, betaking himself to flight, and hiding himself in the tent of "Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite," was put to death by her, while asleep, by means of a nail driven through his temples. "So God subdued, on that day, Jabin the king of Canaan, before the children of Israel;" "and the land had rest forty years." A triumphal ode, sung by Deborah and Barak on the day of their great exploit, is incorporated into the narrative. †

The history of Gideon, the people's champion against the Midianites, who are said to have grievously oppressed them seven years, is much more extended, and contains matter irrelevant to the subject proposed at the beginning of the book, proceeding even to some statements no otherwise relating to Gideon, than as the persons introduced in them were members of his family. While threshing wheat in a winepress, for the sake of concealment, he is related to have been accost-

* Judges iii. 31.

† iv. 1 — v. 31.

ed by "the angel of the Lord," who summoned him to undertake the deliverance of his nation, giving him proof of his supernatural commission, by causing fire to issue from a rock, to consume an offering which Gideon had laid upon it. Next he received and obeyed a divine direction, to overthrow his father's altar, erected in honor of Baal, and, building another in its place, to sacrifice thereupon to Jehovah. "The spirit of the Lord" then coming upon him, "he blew a trumpet," which gathered about him a force composed of his immediate kindred, at the same time sending messengers to rouse the northern tribes. He asked and obtained further satisfaction respecting his being under a peculiar divine protection; a fleece of wool, which he exposed to the dew through two successive nights, being, according to his proposal, saturated with moisture on the first, while all around was dry, and on the second night continuing dry, while "there was dew on all the ground." *

Proceeding against the Midianites with the force he had collected by such exertions, he is related, under another divine direction, to have proposed to as many as were "fearful and afraid" to return to their homes; upon which no less than twenty-two thousand men retired, leaving ten thousand under his command. Still "the Lord said unto Gideon, 'The people are yet too many,'" and directed him to lead them to a river's side to drink, and then to reserve for the war only those who should raise the water to their lips in the hollow of the hand. These proved to be three hundred in number, and the rest of the army were dismissed to their homes. With his little band, he passed towards the Midianitish host, which "lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude." Here, along with "Phu-

* Judges vi. 1 - 40.

rah his servant," whom he was permitted to take for a companion, if afraid to go alone, he approached the enemy's camp, and heard a soldier relate a dream, which a comrade, to whom he told it, interpreted to forebode an overthrow by the hand of Gideon. Encouraged by this omen, he forthwith returned to his associates, whom he marshalled into three companies, furnishing every man with a trumpet for his right hand, and a lamp within a pitcher for his left. At midnight they approached the hostile force, and breaking their pitchers, and sounding their trumpets, as they saw Gideon do (three hundred men, yet distributed "on every side of all the camp" of more than a hundred thousand), the sudden burst of light and sound so terrified their sleeping enemies, that they needed to do no more. "The Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host; and the host fled." The victory was completed by a general rally of the forces of the northern tribes, and a seizure, by the Ephraimites, of the fords of the Jordan. A hundred and twenty thousand Midianitish warriors were put to death in the first rising, and fifteen thousand more in a subsequent engagement. The two kings of Midian were taken prisoners, and slain by Gideon's own hand, in revenge for their murder of his brothers. And "thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more; and the country was in quiet forty years in the days of Gideon." *

The history here turns from its common course, to relate incidents of internal dissension and disorder. The tribe of Ephraim remonstrated with Gideon, because, by neglecting to summon them to the war, he

* Judges vii. 1 - 25; viii. 10 - 12, 18 - 21, 28.

had deprived them of a share in the honor and spoils of victory. He met them, however, with a conciliating reply, and "then their anger was abated toward him." * In the pursuit of the common enemy, he came to two cities on the east side of the Jordan, where he was churlishly refused the scanty supplies demanded by the wants of his three hundred faint and weary followers. For the present he went on his way; but, returning, took signal vengeance for the affront. † The people, grateful for his services, desired to invest him with regal authority, to be transmitted to his children. He rejected the proposal, asking only for his recompense the earrings which had been taken in war. Then, forgetful of the cause of the public distresses, which he had just been the instrument of removing, he "made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah; which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house." ‡ He "died in a good old age," "and it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their God"; "neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbael, namely, Gideon." §

Besides seventy sons, born of his wives, Gideon left a son, named Abimelech, who, tampering with "his mother's brethren," "the men of Shechem," for the furtherance of his ambitious designs, || obtained from them "threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith." With the aid of this money, he

* Judges viii. 1-3.

† viii. 4-9, 13-17.

‡ viii. 22-27.

§ viii. 29-35.

|| There is great verisimilitude in this representation of an attempt, on the part of the ambitious tribe of Ephraim, to win to their interests a son of Gideon, who, by the mother's side, was one of themselves, and so recover the ascendancy, which, during his father's life, had belonged to the race of Manasseh.

surrounded himself with a retinue of "vain and light persons," and putting his brothers to death, with the exception of one only, named Jotham, caused himself to be proclaimed king.* Jotham reprov'd the act, in a parable which the writer has preserved, and then fled away beyond his brother's reach.† It was not long, that Abimelech quietly enjoyed his criminally acquired elevation. In fulfilment of Jotham's prophetic imprecation, "God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren." Their disaffection raised up a new aspirant to the throne, in the person of "Gaal, the son of Ebed." Abimelech, proceeding to suppress the revolt, levelled Shechem with the ground, but soon after, in laying siege to another rebellious city, lost his own life by means of a millstone, thrown by a woman from its tower.‡ We read nothing, after his death, of Jotham, nor does the history pursue any further the fortunes of that family.

Of Tola, the champion, who, "after Abimelech, arose to defend Israel," nothing is told, except that he was "the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir, in Mount Ephraim; and he judged Israel twenty-and-three years, and died and was buried in Shamir"; and so, of the next administration, the whole record is, that, "after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty-and-two years; and he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass-colts, and they had thirty cities; and Jair died, and was buried in Canaan."§

The aggravated idolatries of the Israelites now again exposed them to the divine displeasure, evinced in permitting their country to be overrun by the Philistines

* Judges ix. 1-6. † ix. 7-21. ‡ ix. 22-57. § x. 1-5.

and Ammonites, who “vexed and oppressed the children of Israel eighteen years.” They “cried unto the Lord,” who, reminding them of their past delinquencies, and referring them to the protection of the gods whom they had preferred to him, declared, “I will deliver you no more.” Distressed more than ever by this sentence of abandonment, where alone, they now perceived, they could look for aid, “they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord, and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.” Yet we are not told, that it was under any divine direction that they proceeded to embody a force, and resolve, that, “whoever will begin to fight against the children of Ammon, he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.” *

“Jephthah, the Gileadite, was a mighty man of valor”; and in him they find the champion whom they need. Expelled in his youth from his father’s house, “there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him”; in other words, as the language is commonly, and, without doubt, properly interpreted, he had become captain of a band of freebooters. To him, in their strait, the Israelites of the northeastern region had recourse. Their negotiation with him, after complaints of former griefs, terminated in his consenting to assume the command, on condition of being raised to the sovereignty, should their enterprise be attended with success; an arrangement which was solemnly ratified in the assembly of the western tribes “before the Lord in Mizpeh.” † He sent a message to “the king

* Judges x. 6–18.

† xi. 1–11. In 11, I understand the writer to speak of Mizpeh in Judah; comp. x. 17; Josh. xv. 38. There was also, according to him, a Mizpeh of Gilead (xi. 29), but, when he speaks of it, he is careful to add this particular designation; and it is hard to imagine, that he supposed the

of the children of Ammon," insisting on the right of the Israelites to an undisturbed possession of their country ; which being attended by no good result, he proceeded to hostile operations, having first endeavoured to propitiate Jehovah by a promise as little in accordance with right views of the divine character, as with the principles of the Jewish Law. "Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever [or, as it would be at least as well translated, *whosoever*] cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it [or *him*] up for a burnt-offering." The victory was won ; "and Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house ; and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels, and with dances ; and she was his only child ; besides her he had neither son nor daughter." But the rough bandit felt the coercion of his oath ; and his child, when it was made known to her, yielded herself an unrepining sacrifice. She but withdrew, for a short time, to "go up and down upon the mountains" ; "and it came to pass, at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow, which he had vowed." *

The Ephraimites, expostulating with Jephthah for his neglect to summon them to the war, experienced a

site of the tabernacle ever to have been, after the conquest, on the eastern side of the river.

* Judges xi. 12 - 40. I do not think it worth while to waste any words upon the vain attempt of some of the commentators to show, that it was only perpetual celibacy, and service at the tabernacle, to which Jephthah devoted his child. Some of the objections to such an interpretation, are as obvious as they are insurmountable.

different reception, at his hands, from what, on a similar occasion, they had met with from Gideon. Resenting their complaint, and retorting upon them a charge of remissness in the common cause, he marshalled a force of "all the men of Gilead"; engaged and defeated the malecontents; took possession of the fords by which they would have returned over the Jordan to their home from their expedition to his country, and put to death forty-two thousand of them, detecting them, as fast as they arrived, by their provincial pronunciation of a word.*

"Jephthah judged Israel six years." Of his immediate successors little is recorded. "After him, Ibzan, of Bethlehem, judged Israel. And he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons; and he judged Israel seven years." "And after him, Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years." "And after him, Abdon, the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel; and he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten asscolts; and he judged Israel eight years."†

The narrative, which next follows, is of the most extraordinary description. It does not, like most of the preceding, relate any general rising of the Israelites against their oppressors, nor an emancipation of them, by any means, from a foreign yoke. It details a series of the most singular incidents in the life of a wayward individual, distinguished by a superhuman strength, which he employed in ways apparently as unprofitable as they were marvellous. The character of Samson is but a wild compound of the buffoon, the profligate, and the bravo. With a sort of childish cunning, and such

* Judges xii. 1-7.

† xii. 8-15.

physical faculties as a fantastic invention has ascribed to the *Ogre*, he is without a common measure of capacity to provide for his own protection; and, when he undertakes any thing against the enemies of his people, it does not appear to be with a view to any public object, but under some unaccountable prompting of a lunatic's caprice.

The birth of this altogether peculiar personage is represented to have been attended with remarkable presages. When the Israelites had groaned forty years under a Philistine bondage, "the angel of the Lord appeared" to the wife of a man "of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah;" and announced to her, that, childless as heretofore she had been, she should bear a son, who should be "a Nazarite unto God" from his birth, and should "begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." In answer to the prayer of Manoah, the angel appeared a second time, and, having repeated his direction, that, before the child's birth, his mother should herself observe the appropriate Nazarite regimen, disappeared wondrously in the flame of an offering, which, during the interview, Manoah had "offered upon a rock unto the Lord."*

The child was born, and was named Samson. Arrived at man's estate, he became enamoured of a Philistine woman. On his way to the city where she dwelt, "behold, a young lion roared against him, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid." Passing by the spot on his return, he saw "a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion," and noted the fact for future use. Accordingly, to his "thirty companions," at his nuptials, he proposed the riddle, "Out of the

* Judges xiii. 1 - 25.

eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," laying a wager with them, that it would foil their ingenuity. Finding themselves perplexed for the solution, they applied to his bride, threatening to burn her with her family if she refused her aid. By her importunities she obtained the answer from her husband, and communicated it to them, in time to save them from the penalty. When they announced their discovery to Samson, he replied with a characteristic apothegm, and, "the spirit of the Lord" coming upon him, he "went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them," to provide himself with the means of paying the forfeit.*

Returning, after a time, to the home of his wife's family, and learning, that, in his absence, she had been wedded to another husband, Samson, in his indignation at the outrage, caught three hundred foxes, or jackals, and, fastening firebrands to them, turned them loose into the Philistines' standing corn. They, in revenge, put his wife and her father to death by burning; and he, in further retaliation, "smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter."† "Three thousand of the men of Judah," who had been threatened by the Philistines for harbouring such a nuisance, pursued him to "the top of the rock Etam," where, having obtained from them a promise, that they would do no worse than give him up to the common enemy, he surrendered himself into their hands. Accordingly, "they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock; and, when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him; and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burned with fire;

* Judges xiv. 1-20.

† xv. 1-8.

and his bands loosed from off his hands; and he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith; and Samson said, 'With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.'” Being thirsty after this achievement, and praying for relief, “God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout, and, when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived.” At this point, according to the opinion of some commentators, one account of his adventures is terminated with the words, “and he judged Israel, in the days of the Philistines, twenty years,” and another begins.*

At Gaza, a Philistine city, whither he had gone to a resort of vice, he was waylaid at the gates by a party of the inhabitants, expecting to seize him when the day should dawn. To escape them, he “arose at midnight and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron;” a distance of forty miles.† The Philistines next prevailed upon his mistress, Delilah, with an enormous bribe, to learn from him in what resided his prodigious strength, and how it might be overcome. Three times he deluded her with false replies. First, he told her, that, if his arms were bound “with seven green withs that were never dried,” he would “be weak and be as another man.” She bound him in the manner he had specified, and bade her Philistine confederates in the apartment to

* Judges xv. 9-20. — xvi. 12 is so like a repetition of xv. 13, 14, as to favor the opinion, above referred to, respecting two records of the exploits of Samson.

† xvi. 1-3.

seize their prey. But, no sooner did she make known to him their presence, than “he brake the withs as a thread of tow is broken, when it toucheth the fire.” * The experiment was repeated by binding him, according to his direction, “with new ropes, that never were occupied,” and again with the same ill success; “he brake them from off his arms like a thread.” † Still the request was renewed; and, having directed “the seven locks of his head” to be fastened as the woof of a texture woven in a loom, “he awaked out of his sleep,” — in which the conspirators had been around him, but had neglected to use their advantage to do him violence, — “and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.” ‡ At length, overcome by the importunities of Delilah, and unwarned by what he had thrice seen of her purpose to abuse his confidence in practising against his liberty and life, he revealed to her the secret of his invincibleness. “He told her all his heart, and said unto her, ‘There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb; if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.’” His astonishing imprudence wrought its natural effect. Delilah, having caused him to be spoiled, while asleep, of his inestimable locks, roused him, as three times before, by the cry, “The Philistines be upon thee, Samson.” Rising, he found his wonted vigor to have departed, and “the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass, and he did grind in the prison-house.” §

They neglected, however, the precautions, which the circumstances would naturally have dictated, against the

* Judges xvi. 4–9. † xvi. 10–12. ‡ xvi. 13, 14. § xvi. 15–21.

renewal of his strength; and as his hair grew again, he became gradually prepared to take a memorable vengeance on his oppressors. At a great festival, held in honor of Dagon, their god, to thank him for placing their terrible enemy in their power, "it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, 'Call for Samson, that he may make us sport.'" "And there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld, while Samson made sport." Causing himself to be guided to "the two middle pillars upon which the house stood," he grasped them with his arms, "and he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein; so the dead, which he slew at his death, were more than they which he slew in his life." *

The rest of the book consists of two histories, having no relation to the subject of the previous portion, and involving scarcely any thing of a supernatural character.† In the first of these we read, that an Ephraimite woman, having dedicated a large quantity of silver to Jehovah, to be used in making "a graven image, and a molten image," it was pilfered from her by her son, named *Micah*. He having, after a time, confessed the theft, and restored the money, she took a portion, and executed with it her original purpose. Micah had other idols, in whose worship he employed one of his sons as priest. But, desirous to give to his ritual greater pomp or greater sanctity, he availed himself of an opportunity offered by the visit of a travelling Levite, and engaged him with a yearly stipend to "be unto him a father and a priest." He is represented

* Judges xvi. 22 - 31.

† I say "*scarcely any thing*," with reference to xx. 18, 23, 27, 28.

to have persuaded himself, that, by this provision for an orderly worship of his images, he had secured the favor of Jehovah. "Then said Micah, 'Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.' " *

This extraordinary connexion did not long continue. The services of the mercenary Levite were solicited in another quarter. The tribe of Dan had no dwelling-place. "Inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel." † They sent out five men of their number to look for a place of settlement, who, on their way, came to the house of Micah, and were entertained there. Before their departure, the Levite, with whom it is intimated that they had a previous acquaintance, explained to them his relations to the family, and assured them, that the Lord would prosper their enterprise. ‡ Proceeding, they came to the city of Laish, in the northeastern region of Canaan, and, ascertaining that its inhabitants were "quiet and secure," and would fall an easy prey to an energetic assailant, they returned to their associates to report their observations. § "Six hundred men, appointed with weapons of war," set out with them on the proposed expedition. The party, who had before enjoyed the hospitality of Micah, guided their companions to his dwelling; and, ill requiting the kindness he had, on the former occasion, shown, excited them to rob him of his gods; "and these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image." The Levite making

* Judges xvii. 1 – 13.

† xviii. 1. To save the contradiction to Joshua xix. 40 – 48, our translators have written, "*all their inheritance*," &c.; but this is a mere desertion of the original.

‡ Judges xviii. 2 – 6.

§ xviii. 7 – 10.

some little show of remonstrance, they easily persuaded him, that it was better to be "a priest unto a tribe and family in Israel," than "to be a priest unto the house of one man"; "and the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people." * Micah having followed them, accompanied by a party of his neighbours, to reclaim his property and his priest, they silenced and drove him back with insults and threats.† Coming to Laish, which was a dependence of Zidon, they put its inhabitants to the sword, and burnt their city; then, replacing it by another, "they called the name of the city *Dan*, after the name of Dan their father." "And the children of Dan set up the graven image; and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan, until the day of the captivity of the land." ‡

The second of the two histories, at the close of the book, relates to the occasion and the issue of a war between the Benjamites and the eleven other tribes. A brutal injury, of which death was the consequence, had been done by certain men of Gibeah, a city of Benjamin, to one of the family of a Levite, who had been received to the hospitality of an inhabitant of that place, while absent, on a journey, from Mount Ephraim, his home. Adopting a method to make known the out-

* Judges xviii. 11-21.

† xviii. 22-26.

‡ xviii. 27-31. — In 30, the Hebrew word corresponding to "Manasseh," is written מנשה with a *suspended* ך. It is probable, that the introduction of the ך is a corruption by some scribe, who could not endure, that a grandson of Moses should be the subject of such a history. If that letter were absent we should read, "the son of Moses," instead of "the son of Manasseh." The Vulgate, also, presents this reading, and Moses actually had a son named Gershom; comp. Ex. ii. 22.

rage, the best suited to excite a universal horror and indignation, the Levite divided the body into twelve parts, and "sent them into all the coasts of Israel." * Thereupon "the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the Lord in Mizpeh; and the chief of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword." † Having caused the Levite to repeat his story, they sent a message to the tribe of Benjamin, demanding that the offenders should be given up to die. ‡ The demand was refused, and war ensued, in which (though its successive measures are described as being taken under divine direction), the Benjamites, fighting at the discouraging odds of twenty-six thousand seven hundred men against four hundred thousand, were for a time victorious, destroying, in one battle, twenty-two thousand, and in another eighteen thousand, of their adversaries. § This done, again "the children of Israel inquired of the Lord" with weeping, offerings, and fasting, and were commanded to try the issue of yet another conflict; and now "the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel, and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites, that day, twenty-and-five thousand and an hundred men." ||

"But six hundred men turned, and fled to the wilderness"; and, on the first access of relenting thoughts, it became an anxious consideration of the other tribes, how, from this feeble remnant, they might provide, lest "there should be one tribe lacking in Israel." They

* Judges xix. 1–30. One is tempted to imagine, that this narrative, as to its main circumstances, was modelled upon that in Gen. xix. 1–11.

† Judges xx. 1, 2. ‡ xx. 3–13. § xx. 14–25. || xx. 26–48.

"had sworn in Mizpeh," where they had assembled before the tabernacle, "saying, 'There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife'"; and, in their assault upon the Benjamite cities, they had put to death the women of that tribe as well as the men.* Under these circumstances they have recourse to extraordinary expedients to supply the surviving Benjamites with wives. In the first place, observing, that the late general summons of the people had been neglected by the inhabitants of a city, named *Jabesh*, in Gilead, they sent a body of "twelve thousand men of the valiantest" to put them to death, including the married women, though why they were not spared does not appear, any more than the reason of the similar severity exercised in the recent war.

Four hundred unmarried females were brought away captives from *Jabesh*, and betrothed to so many husbands of the remnant of Benjamin.† Two hundred Benjamites remained to be provided for; and, in their behalf, recourse was had to an equally, if not more extraordinary device. There was held at that time "a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly," at which "the daughters of Shiloh came out to dance in dances." To this place "the elders of the congregation" accordingly advised the Benjamites to repair, and, seizing each upon a devotee, to carry them to their homes; "and it shall be," said the elders, "when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, 'Be favorable unto them for our sakes; for ye did not *give* unto them at this

* Judges xxi. 1-3. This treatment of the women is not distinctly asserted in the account of the war, though the general expressions in xx. 48, as they stand in the original, would well bear that sense; but see xxi. 16.

† xxi. 4-15.

time, that ye should be guilty.'” The scheme was carried into execution; and from these six hundred men it was, if we consider ourselves here to be dealing with authentic history, that the tribe of Benjamin, so powerful in the days of Saul and David, was restored.*

The book of Ruth, which contains only a domestic history, refers the events which it records to the period of the Judges,† and is by some commentators considered to be as much a part of the book called by that name, as the two compositions last remarked on, which treat of the emigration of the Danites, and of the Benjamite war.‡ A further reason, which makes it proper to speak of it in this place, is, that, though when the division of the Hebrew Scriptures into the three parts of “the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa,” had come to be generally recognised, we find it arranged, by the later Talmudists, under the third of these heads, yet the list of Jerome, who was nearly contemporary with them, refers it to the early Prophets.§

The history is of a character that most agreeably relieves the sombre and repulsive shades of the picture we have been contemplating. In consequence of a famine in Palestine, Elimelech, an “Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah,” accompanied by his wife, named Naomi, and their two sons, emigrates to the country of Moab. There, after his death, his sons “took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth.” The sons also died, and, their widowed parent resolving to return to her country and kindred, Ruth refused to be dissuaded

* Judges xxi. 16 – 25.

† Ruth i. 1.

‡ Jerome, in his “Prologus Galeatus,” speaks of the book of Ruth as being reckoned with that of Judges. See also Origen. apud Euseb. “Hist. Eccl.” Lib. vi. cap. 25.

§ See Vol. I. p. 39.

from accompanying her. "Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth; and his name was Boaz." Into his field, after their arrival at Bethlehem, Ruth chanced to go, while gleaning after the reapers, "in the beginning of barley harvest." * Attracted by her appearance, and informed of her praiseworthy conduct towards her mother-in-law, Boaz bade her return from day to day, and directed his servants to give her a courteous welcome. "So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean, unto the end of barley-harvest and of wheat-harvest." †

Encouraged by what seemed so propitious an omen, Naomi counselled Ruth to seek an opportunity for intimating to Boaz the claim which she had upon him as the nearest kinsman of her deceased husband. Boaz entertained the proposal favorably, but replied, that there was another person more nearly related to the family than himself, whose title must first be disposed of. ‡ Without delay, he applied himself to ascertain, whether the kinsman in question was inclined to assert his right, — a right which extended to a purchase of the reversion (at the Jubilee) of Elimelech's estate. Finding him indisposed to the measure, he obtained from him a release, ratified according to the legal forms of the time, and then proceeded himself to redeem the patrimony of Elimelech, and espouse the widow of his son, in order "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance." From this union sprang David, the great king of Israel, whose line the writer, in conclusion, traces up, through Boaz, to Pharez, son of Judah. §

The names of Boaz, the second husband of Ruth, and of Obed, her son, belong to the genealogies. || Her

* Ruth i. 1 — ii. 3.

† ii. 4 — 23.

‡ iii. 1 — 18.

§ iv. 1 — 22.

|| 1 Chron. ii. 11, 12; Mat. i. 5; Luke iii. 32.

own name also occurs in one of them ; but, as to any thing further than this, she is not an historical character, any more than her first husband, or his brother and parents, who are not elsewhere so much as mentioned.

Concerning the authorship of the book which relates her adventures, we have no information whatever. That it was written at a time remote from that of the events which it professes to record, is a safe inference from that text (assuming the text itself not to have been a later addition) which explains a custom, referred to, as having been “the manner *in former time* in Israel, concerning redeeming and concerning changing.”* That it was written at least as late as the establishment of David’s house upon the throne, appears from the concluding verse ; and several Chaldee forms of language are noticed, making it probable, that its composition should be referred to a period not long antecedent to that of the Captivity.† There is nothing in the character of the incidents related to make it improbable, that the writer intended to present, as true history, a tradition which had come down to his time. But whether such was the fact, or whether he availed himself of historical names to frame a fictitious narrative (a kind of composition, as we shall have occasion to see hereafter, recognised as legitimate by the Jews, as well as by other nations), I conceive we have not the means to decide. The fact, that he seems to have misinterpreted a provision of the Law in respect to the rights and liabilities of the nearest kinsman of an Israelite deceased, indicates, either that he lived at a time when that rule had gone into disuse, or that, not professing to write

* Ruth iv. 7 ; comp. Deut. xxv. 9.

† See De Wette’s “Einleitung in das A. T.” § 194 ; Eichhorn’s “Einleitung &c.” § 464.

history, he did not feel bound to be precise in his statement of legal requisitions. *

It appeared proper to say, in this place, these few words respecting the book of Ruth, related as it is, in the ways which have been pointed out, to the book which immediately precedes it. Upon the grounds which have been taken, it would be all in vain to discuss, with so many of the commentators, the question, whether the famine, therein spoken of, is to be referred to the time of Ehud, of Gideon, of Shamgar, of Eli, or of some other judge. In the next lecture, I return to the book of Judges, with the endeavour to reach some conclusions respecting its composition and character.

* With Ruth iii. 13, iv. 5, comp. Deut. xxv. 5, 6, where the obligation to marry the widow of an Israelite dying childless, is made to rest upon his surviving brother, but not on any more distant relative.

LECTURE XXIX.

ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY OF THE BOOK OF
JUDGES.

THE HISTORICAL CREDIT OF THE BOOK NOT SUSTAINED BY ITS PLACE IN THE JEWISH CANON,—NOR BY TESTIMONY TO IT OR TO ITS CONTENTS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE BIBLE,—NOR BY THE PERSONAL AUTHORITY OF ITS WRITER.—ITS WRITER UNKNOWN.—DIVISION INTO TWO PARTS.—QUESTION RESPECTING THE TIME OF THEIR COMPOSITION.—QUESTIONS RESPECTING APPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY OF MIRACULOUS OPERATION.—REMARKS ON THE CONDITIONS, UNDER WHICH ALLEGED MIRACLES ARE CREDIBLE.—IMPROBABILITY OF MANY RELATIONS IN THE BOOK, NOT OF A SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER.—EMBARRASSMENT OF ITS CHRONOLOGY.—APPARENT EXAGGERATION AND INCORRECTNESS IN ITS ACCOUNT OF THE INVASIONS.—SCHEME OF CONTEMPORANEOUS ADMINISTRATIONS AND SERVITUDES, IRRECONCILABLE WITH THE LANGUAGE.—CONCLUSIONS, SAFELY DEDUCIBLE FROM THE BOOK.—UNSUITABLENESS OF SUPERNATURAL INFORMATION TO THE OBJECT OF THE WRITER.—METHOD APPROPRIATE TO HIS PURPOSE, THE SAME WHICH IS ACTUALLY PURSUED.—REFERENCES TO ANCIENT MONUMENTS, AND USE MADE OF ANCIENT WRITINGS.—QUESTION CONCERNING THE EXTENT OF THE CONQUESTS OF THE INVADING NATIONS.—TIME OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE LAST FIVE CHAPTERS, AND OF THEIR INCORPORATION INTO THE BOOK.—ALLEGED ABSENCE OF TESTIMONY IN THE BOOK TO THE PREVIOUS EXISTENCE OF THE PENTATEUCH.—PROBABLE COMPETENCY OF ITS WRITER.

WE have attended to the relations which make up the book of Judges. Did they come before us with different associations from those under which we have been accustomed to regard them, we should have no hesitation in saying, that some of them are of the most puerile, and some of the most revolting character. On what authority, if any, are we to receive them as true

accounts of events connected with the revelation of the religion of the Jews, and with a divine administration of the affairs of that people?

No such authority is to be found, where perhaps most, who are in error upon the main subject, suppose themselves to find it, in the fact, that the book of Judges is comprehended in the collection of Jewish Scriptures. This important point was argued at length in my second Lecture, to which it is now sufficient to refer.

No such authority is to be ascribed to the book, in consequence of testimonies in other parts of the Bible. It is not so much as mentioned in any other writing embraced in that collection.

The authority in question is not to be found in any use of its materials, — that is, in quotations from it, — in other books of Scripture. If it were cited by them, this would not necessarily affirm its historical authority. A mere citation from a book, — by way of illustration, or otherwise, — no one can understand as involving an assertion of its credibility. References, in another writing, to events recorded in the book of Judges, would prove, that, in some way, — by tradition or by record, — a report of those events had reached the author of that other writing; but it would not, alone, so much as prove, that, at the time of his composition, the book of Judges was in being. The particular events, so referred to, we may, if we see cause, receive as true on the authority of that other writer, but it is not an authority which extends to the confirmation of whatever else may be contained in the history, with which, in certain parts, he agrees. The books of Samuel, Isaiah, and the Psalms * present brief references to characters

* 1 Sam. xii. 9–11; 2 Sam. xi. 21; Isaiah x. 26; Ps. lxxxiii. 9–11,

and events, of which we find a detailed account in that of Judges ; but this proves nothing respecting the truth of other relations in the latter book, and especially it proves nothing respecting its relations of a supernatural character, to which, on the other hand, the former books do not refer at all.

That authority of the book, concerning which we inquire, is not to be found in the personal credit of its author. I will not waste words by arguing, that of its authorship we know nothing. The notions of its having been written by Phinehas, Eli, Samuel, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ezra, or some other Old Testament worthy, are utterly unsupported fancies, not entitled to the smallest respect on the part of a conscientious inquirer.

As a last resource for controverting the argument against its credibility, afforded by the character of its contents, are we able to show, that it was composed at a time when trust-worthy information could be obtained, and that, at or near the period of its composition, it was received as a credible record by those competent to pass judgment on its claims ? We are able to show nothing of the kind. As to its reception, we are utterly in the dark concerning its external history, until, in the second century before the Christian era, nearly a thousand years, at least, after the latest period to which its records can be understood to relate, we find it making part of the collection of Jewish writings, called the Old Testament. As to the time of its composition, for evidence of which we must look to itself, we are able to allege nothing with certainty. But this is a part of the inquiry demanding to be pursued in some detail.

In searching for the time of the composition of this book, we are embarrassed by our ignorance respecting

the important preliminary point, how much originally belonged to it, of all that is now included under its name. I have already observed, that, near the beginning of the treatise, its subject seems to be stated with some formality. We find a course of general remark respecting the method of God's administration of the affairs of his chosen people, within a definite period, which the writer appears to propose to illustrate by an induction of particular instances.* This subject is, for the most part, closely adhered to, through a considerable part of the book; though, in connexion with the names of some of the judges therein mentioned, nothing is told of any exploits of theirs for the emancipation of the people, and all the account of the fortunes of the family of Gideon, after his death, is, considered in this view, only an episode. With the thirteenth chapter begins the history of Samson, which, as it relates nothing of any rescue of his countrymen from their oppressors by his means, has only a partial connexion with the main theme of the book. And the two narratives which succeed to this, extending together through five chapters, have manifestly no connexion whatever with that theme.†

Distinguishing the two portions, before and after the beginning of the seventeenth chapter, from one another, it is easily inferred, from such means of judging as they respectively furnish, that both were written at a period considerably later than the events which they record. The latter portion clearly indicates its origin to have been subsequent to the establishment of the

* Judges ii. 10-23.

† For some differences of phraseology, which have been remarked between the account, or accounts, of Samson, and the previous part of the book, indicating, as has been thought, an independent origin, the critical reader may see Jahn's "*Einleitung in das A. T.*" A. ii. § 35; De Wette's "*Einleitung*," &c. § 174.

monarchy, by its repeated allusions to the fact, that, at the time of the occurrence of the two events which it relates, "there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes;" * while, on the other hand, those events, from their nature, must have been understood to have taken place, if at all, soon after the occupation of Canaan, since one was the enterprise of a portion of the people to obtain a place of settlement,† and the other, — a war, during the lifetime of Phinehas, himself a contemporary of Joshua,‡ — resulted in the almost total destruction of one tribe, which, however, had entirely recovered itself at the time of the foundation of the regal government, and which, indeed, was then of such consideration as to furnish the first monarch.§

As to the first portion, its forms of language, where it speaks of certain customs, are such as clearly to intimate, that they originated or prevailed in a distant period; || and, since such language occurs towards the close of what appears to have been intended as a narration of consecutive events, it testifies still more for the ancient date of the events earlier described, than for that of those with which it stands immediately connected. The same inference is to be drawn from the little information, which the writer appears to have possessed respecting six of the judges whom he mentions, and his ignorance respecting one individual, whom a

* Judges xvii. 6; xxi. 25; comp. xviii. 1, xix. 1.

† Also a name, which was given to a certain place in the course of the expedition, is said to have continued attached to it "unto this day" (xviii. 12).

‡ xx. 28. comp. Josh. xxii. 13.

§ Also, the distance of the time of the writer from the time which he treats of may, in the latter instance, be argued from his apparent ignorance of so much as the name of the Levite (Judges xix. 1), whose ill treatment occasioned so much trouble.

|| xi. 39, 40; xiv. 10; see also vi. 24; x. 4; xv. 19.

later book records as having belonged to their number.* That this part was written later than the book of Joshua, is further a natural conclusion from its taking up the history after his death, recorded in that book. On the other hand, the text, which speaks of the Jebusites as dwelling "with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem *unto this day*,"† — if it be genuine, and if we see no reason to distrust the account of David's having dispossessed that people, — forbids us to assign the composition of this part to a period later than the eighth year of David's reign.

Such is the authority, upon which rest the relations contained in the book of Judges. That work is anonymous, and, for any thing we know to the contrary, was always so. We cannot so much as point out its author's age; but he himself gives us repeatedly to understand, that he wrote at a time, when the events which he related were already long past. What those events were, we have seen. Some of them are essentially probable; others are of the most extraordinary character. In respect to these latter, it is easy to say, that they were miraculous. But they who say it should consider well, whether miracles do not require, to substantiate them, a very different degree of evidence from what here is furnished.

They should consider, further, whether, from the nature of the events here in question, it is any more possible to account for them on the ground of divine supernatural agency, than on that of the operation of mere common causes. Miracles have their laws as much as any other occurrences; laws deduced from those divine perfections, which, under the fit circumstances, cause them to be wrought. A miracle, under certain con-

* 1 Sam. xii. 11.

† Judges i. 21; comp. 2 Sam. v. 6-9.

ditions, is a perfectly credible event. When we undertake to allege its actual occurrence, we must be prepared to show the previous existence of such conditions; divest it of these, and we have no longer any ground of defence. When I undertake to assert, that God has, in any instance, miraculously deviated from that regular course of action, which his wisdom and goodness have led him to adopt, I cannot expect, that any reasonable man will listen to me, unless I first show, that, under existing circumstances, the deviation alleged was called for by the same wisdom and goodness, and suited to accomplish their designs. Are the marvellous acts recorded in Judges, — those of Samson, for instance, — of a description to abide this test, or is the only defensible theory of miracles utterly inapplicable to the maintenance of the credibility of those relations? The plea of the advocate of miraculous agency would be; “The acts in question, how extraordinary soever, are such as, under the circumstances, the divine wisdom and benevolence would stand engaged to perform.” The principle is sound; but the application, in the present instance, is impossible. The objector would reply; “The acts in question are such as *cannot* be supposed to have proceeded, under the circumstances, from the divine wisdom and benevolence.” *

I may be pardoned for some repetition on a point of so much importance. I ask particular attention to the fact, that the judicious apologists of revealed religion,

* Further, the objector would say, that, aside from all relations and purposes of the extraordinary acts recorded, the account of some of them, taken as it stands, is not in accordance with the idea of their having been intended to be represented as direct acts of God's power, in any way. The departure of Samson's strength, when his locks were shorn, and its gradual restoration as they grew again, are rather of the nature of magic, than of miracle, as any one understands the latter.

when they have treated of supernatural operations, have esteemed it necessary to prove the antecedent credibility of those which they alleged, before producing the particular evidence of their actual occurrence. They have admitted, that God would not overrule or interrupt the ordinary course of things by any direct and manifest interposition of his own, except for some substantial reason; and that, accordingly, some weighty occasion for his interposition must be shown to exist, before a miracle becomes provable, — before one can pretend to adduce evidence in its support. Such an occasion they have found, whenever religious truth, materially important to men's well-being, incapable of being otherwise attained by them than through direct revelation, and having such a correspondence with their existing state of culture, that it might affect their minds, needed to be revealed. Thus, before they have presumed to present the testimony to the Christian miracles, they have thought it necessary to show, that the world, at the time of the promulgation of Christianity, was in such a state as greatly to need its revelations, and that only through miraculous interposition, as far as we can see, could its revelations be made.

I ask, whether, in respect to many of the relations in the book of Judges, this argument would not wholly fail. I ask, not whether we can show, but whether we can imagine, any connexion between many of the marvels there recorded, and any great purpose of good to man, which it concerns the divine benevolence to advance. I go further, and inquire, whether the advocate of revealed religion does not give to its assailants a great advantage, when he admits any thing like an identity between the successful defence of his faith, and the defence of some of those statements as true history, — when he allows the idea, that both are to stand or fall

together. For myself, I cannot profess to wonder at the state of the mind, which, whether inclined to skepticism or to faith, finds itself repelled or sorely perplexed by the idea, that these records make an integral part of a revelation from God, or in any way a necessary part of a Christian's belief.

The want of authority in the book, as far as this is to be gathered from the nature of its contents, is not inferred only from the miraculous character of many of its relations, but also from the occurrence of statements objectionable, in point of probability, on other accounts. Some of these describe events, which, though involving nothing supernatural, it seems impossible to reconcile with any known principles of human action.* Some are inconsistent with others in the same book; and some with representations in other books of better credit.† In the war with Jephthah, forty-two thousand men of Ephraim are said to have perished; a tribe, which, at the last census before the invasion, numbered only thirty-two thousand five hundred warriors,‡ and which, on the other hand, could not have been nearly annihilated three hundred years after Moses, since, in less than five hundred years after him, it was in force to take the lead of the northern tribes in the establishment of another kingdom.§ This great number may be ascribed to corruption of the text; but the same can-

* E. g. Judges xv. 12, 13; xvi. 17; xix. 27, 28; xx. 48, comp. xxi. 16; xxi. 19-22.

† Comp. i. 21, with i. 8; iii. 1, 2, with ii. 20-23; x. 3, 4, with Numb. xxxii. 41; Judges i. 8, with Josh. xv. 63; Judges i. 1, 10-15, 20, with Josh. x. 36, 37, xv. 13-20; Judges i. 1, 17, with Josh. xii. 14; Judges i. 1, 22-26, with Josh. xii. 16, xvi. 1, 2; Judges xviii. 1, with Josh. xix. 40-46; Judges xviii. 29, with Josh. xix. 47. In this last record, however, the author of the book of Joshua may perhaps be understood as using a *prolepsis*.

‡ Comp. Judges xii. 6, with Numb. xxvi. 37.

§ 1 Kings xi. 26; xii. 20.

not be said of the extraordinary victories in the first place, and subsequently the ruthless slaughter, of the twenty-five thousand men of Benjamin,* since, on the one hand, the greater the force of that tribe, the less incredible are its successes against the combined armies of the nation made to appear, and, on the other, the whole subsequent narration proceeds upon the ground of the tribe of Benjamin having been nearly exterminated. The chronology presented in this book, if (as I understand) the administrations of the Judges are designed to be represented as successive, is irreconcilable with that of the important passage formerly quoted from the first book of Kings.† If it be said, that the former book is the better authority, on account of its earlier composition, I reply, that it might be so, provided the author had made an express statement respecting the time understood by him to have elapsed between the Exodus and the latest events which he records. This, however, he has not done, nor does his attention appear to have been drawn to that question. He does but furnish, in successive particulars, the elements of a computation, the result of which is inconsistent with the one express statement made by the other writer; a statement which there seems good reason to receive as correct, relating, as it does, to a fact, which must have been of the utmost notoriety during the whole term of the independent history of the Jews.

This chronological difficulty is connected with further weighty objections. No careful reader can fail to be struck with the improbability, that a people, with a census of three millions (or not much less), of warlike

* Judges xx. 21, 25, 46, 47; comp. Numb. xxvi. 41.

† See page 131.

habits, and lately established in its territory by a course of victories, should, after a few years, be subdued and overrun ; that, after a few years more, the nation which had held it in bondage should be expelled from its borders, and disappear from its history, to be speedily succeeded by another successful invader ; and that this should take place again and again, empires powerful enough to effect such conquests seeming to have, meanwhile, no hostile relations to one another, nor to stand at all in each other's way, though presenting themselves in such rapid succession on the theatre of action in Judea, and some of them, too, having been but lately overthrown by the Jewish arms. To meet such objections, a scheme of interpretation has been devised, which, of late years, has obtained much favor. It has been supposed, that the authority of each Judge, instead of extending to the whole people, was restricted to one or more tribes, so that some were contemporaneous with others ; and that, in a corresponding manner, the invading armies of Mesopotamia, of Midian, of Philistia, and the rest, possessed themselves only of some portion of the Jewish country, while, at the same time, other districts were suffering under invasions from other foreign quarters.

But whatever was the truth, it is impossible to maintain, that this was the representation which the writer intended to make. So far from appropriating any portion of the territory to the respective Judges as the sphere of their authority, what he declares concerning each one of them is, that he "judged Israel," or was "a deliverer to the children of Israel."* So far from any suggestion, that any of the servitudes or deliverances of the nation, or of the administrations of the Judges,

* Judges iii. 10, 15, 31 ; iv. 4 ; vi. 14 ; x. 1, 3 ; xii. 7, 8, 11, 13 ; xv. 20.

were simultaneous, the account has all the form of a continuous history, and its successive parts are generally connected together with some such expressions as, "The children of Israel did evil *again*," "*After him* was Shamgar," "After Abimelech there arose to defend Israel, Tola, and after him arose Jair," "And after him Ibzan, and after him Elon, and after him Abdon;" * and the "three hundred years" which Jephthah is made to speak of, as having intervened between the time of Moses' conquest of the Amorites, and the renewal of hostilities against Israel on their part, make a sufficiently exact statement, considering that it was round numbers which were intended to be used, of the sum of the several periods previously recorded in the book.† So far from intimating, that it was this or that portion of the people, which, at a given time, was oppressed and delivered, his language uniformly is, "The anger of the Lord was hot against *Israel*"; "The *children of Israel* served" so many years, as the case might be; "When the *children of Israel* cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the *children of Israel*."‡ The cham-

* Judges iii. 12, 31; iv. 1; x. 1, 3; xii. 8, 11, 13.

† xi. 26. The years of the oppressions of the kings of Mesopotamia, Moab, Canaan, and Midian ($8 + 18 + 20 + 7$), and of the administrations of Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, and Jair, with those of the "rest" obtained by some of them ($40 + 80 + 40 + 40 + 3 + 23 + 22$), amount to 301. To these, it is true, are to be added the periods of the administration of Joshua (commonly understood to have lasted seventeen years), and of the independence enjoyed between the time of his death and that of the Mesopotamian invasion. But, under the circumstances in which Jephthah is represented to have spoken of "three hundred years," it is not to be supposed, that an accurate statement of time was intended; and, besides, it is altogether likely, that the discontent of the Moabites, of which he speaks as having manifested itself at the end of that time, began to appear some years before they were able to bring the Israelites under their yoke.

‡ iii. 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 31; iv. 1-3; vi. 1, 2, 6, 14, 37; x. 6-8; xiii. 1.

pions who overthrew the power of the Mesopotamians, the Moabites, and the Midianites, belonged to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Manasseh, which, from their geographical position, could not be reached by the invaders in question, except by passing through the territory of other tribes. The cases, in which the hypothesis in question might seem most plausible, are those of the administrations of Deborah and Gideon. But Deborah is represented as having been at the head of several tribes,* and as having felt authorized to complain of those distant tribes, which did not come to her assistance;† and, at the time of the rising under Gideon, the Midianites and Amalekites are described as having dispersed themselves from Gaza, near the southern border, to Ophrah in Manasseh‡ (which makes two thirds of the territory on the west side of the river), and Gideon is said to have summoned the extreme northern tribes to the war,§ and, at one time, to have been led, in the prosecution of it, as far as to the mountains of Gilead, the most remote region to the northeast. ||

Every one, who has read the book with attention, perceives, that it it would be easy to add largely to the enumeration of improbabilities in the course of its narrative, aside from the accounts which have a supernatural character. But I am the less solicitous to do this, because, were they much fewer and less striking than what have been already specified, the evidence on which they rest would be insufficient to give them credit.

But, because a book comes before us under such circumstances, and exhibits such contents, that we can-

* Judges v. 14, 15, 18.

† v. 16, 17.

‡ vi. 4, 11.

§ vi. 35.

|| vii. 1-3.

not reasonably yield credence to all which it asserts, it does not therefore follow, that it is of no value to us whatever. The composition under our notice belongs to the class of historical writings ; and the history of most nations runs back into a cloudy region of fable. The early history of none is perfectly pure from erroneous representations ; even our New England annals, relating to a period of but little more than two centuries, — and that a period of high civilization, and of a free circulation of books, — are not without their prodigies and portents. And there is no alloy, which more easily blends, to a large extent, with the traditions and documents of an ancient time, than that which I understand to have especially affected the book we have been examining. The leading and characteristic events, which affect the condition of an age, — wars, conquests, servitudes, changes of dynasty, — are, no doubt, subject to be represented with mixtures of exaggeration and other error ; still, being matters of universal notoriety, they are handed down with a comparative correctness of statement, and historians, in a civilized age, feel bound to pay much respect to the testimony of ancient times concerning them. But there is little of such protection for biography. Biography easily becomes romance. The idea of a nation's champion is full of excitement to imaginative minds, and he is at their mercy in respect to the character of that record of him, which is to go down from early and uncultivated to later ages. No historian of our day would hesitate to adopt the outline of the Scottish traditions respecting the resistance made, five hundred years ago, to the usurpation of an English monarch. No historian of our day would think of adopting the legends of Sir William Wallace, imbedded as they are in the self-same narratives. We believe in the fact of the conquest of Je-

rusalem by the arms of the crusaders, without believing all which they reported (to make, in time, the materials of an epic,) of the prowess of King Godfrey. We take the chronicles of Spain for our warrant, when they describe it as having been, in the eleventh century, in a convulsed and distracted state, and with equal readiness we reject them when they proceed to detail the marvellous adventures of the Cid.*

I have argued, that the author of this book wrote long after the latest events, therein recorded, were understood by him to have occurred; and that the early portion of it, contained in sixteen chapters, — though embracing not a little irrelevant matter, and in that respect inartificially composed, — was, in the main, intended to illustrate one proposition, formally stated at the beginning of the treatise; — the proposition, namely, that God, through a series of generations, had dealt with his people agreeably to the principles repeatedly announced by Moses, afflicting them with heavy national calamities when they forsook him, and, as soon as they repented, compassionating and sending them deliverance.† I have further argued, that neither the history of the book, as far as this is known, nor the character of its contents, is such as to authorize the opinion, that its writer possessed supernatural information concerning the subject which he undertook to treat. I now go further, and say, that such information, had it been within his reach, would not have served his purpose. Could he have made his record with the aid

* The reader may see some curious statements concerning the origin of certain legends of the dark ages, once the object of firm faith to Christians, in D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature," Vol. I. Art. *Legends*.

† With Judges ii. 11 – 23, comp. Ex. xxiii. 20 – 33; Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xxviii.

of a divine illumination,—in other words, could he have had access to supernatural sources of information concerning facts, which showed, that, in the course of Providence, the national welfare had actually been affected conformably to principles long ago announced,—a communication of the knowledge so obtained would not have been pertinent to the argument which he had proposed to maintain; for that argument required an appeal to facts known, or capable of being known, to others as well as to himself, and on the same authority. To say, that the fortunes of the nation, in the time which had elapsed since the giving of the Law, had corresponded with declarations therein contained, and then to proceed to establish this by a detail of events, which the people had no reason for believing to have occurred, except his own assurance, would have been to make a representation incapable of carrying conviction to any mind. The only course, suitable under the circumstances, was to collect the historical traditions of the nation, written or oral (traditions which might be ascertained to be such by any one who would take the pains), and then point out, that, in their principal features, they went to confirm the general proposition which he had laid down.

And, in doing this, it was necessary, that he should take them as he found them, and present them, without mutilation, to his readers, even if, within their outline of historical truth, they included subordinate matters, which were neither to the purpose of his argument, nor, in his judgment, entitled to belief. Such as they were, they were his authorities. To proceed to alter them to his mind,—to curtail them of whatever was in his view exceptionable,—would have been to expose himself to the charge of making his authorities, instead of producing them. It is not necessary to suppose, that,

even in his age, experience had not led to some perception of the fact, that tradition, while it preserves, better or worse, the great outline of history, adds numerous particulars of a less trustworthy kind. It is not improbable, that his readers were, in some degree, capable of separating what was certain or probable in the traditions which had come down, from what was neither; and that his readers belonging to any one division of the people, while a natural partiality for the champion of their tribe would incline them to receive with too ready an assent the marvels related of him, would look, with some degree of proper distrust, upon similar narratives relating to some hero who was of another tribe, with whose legends, also, they had not been familiar from infancy. But, however this may be, if the view which has been taken of the object of the book be correct, it was evidently not to its author's purpose to expurgate the records which had come into his hands, by a removal from them of whatever they might contain of an extraordinary character. It would even have frustrated that purpose, by subjecting him to the charge of framing the authorities on which he relied to sustain his conclusion; and, in discarding the particular legends of any tribe,—matter of patriotic (however superstitious) feeling as such legends are wont to be,—he would have wounded its pride, provided for himself discontented readers, and laid himself open to a general suspicion of bad faith in respect to other portions of his record, with which that portion of his readers was less familiar.

The view, which has been taken of the plan and structure of this first part of the book, I think, will be corroborated, to a careful reader, in proportion to the extent of his observations upon its contents. Prefixing a little introductory matter, for part of which he seems

to have been indebted to the book of Joshua,* the author casts his eye over the tribes, which, in some sense, were separate communities, and seeks among them for their various traditions bearing upon his great theme. Either because of their different degrees of affluence in such transmitted records, or his different facilities for obtaining such as were possessed in different parts of the country, or both, the materials which he collects from different quarters are very unequal in amount. Where he finds much history which is to his purpose, he gives much; where little, little; where none, he is silent.

Thus the tribe of Judah furnishes him with an account, which occupies four verses, of the inroad and oppression of the king of Mesopotamia, and of the deliverance obtained by the victorious arms of Othniel; and further with a notice, in two verses, of Ibzan, a judge during seven years, of whom nothing appears to have been recorded but the number of his family. From the tribe of Benjamin a statement is obtained, in nineteen verses, of the successful rising of Ehud against the dominion of the Moabites. Concerning Shamgar, who is said, in one verse, to have "delivered Israel," it does not appear, that the writer knew so much as the tribe to which he belonged. Respecting the enterprise of Deborah, with the aid of Barak of Naphtali, to throw off the yoke of Jabin, a king of Canaan, the information which had come to him was more ample, — that account (including a remarkable lyric, composed in commemoration of their victory) extending through no less than two chapters. This lyric wears the form of a popular ballad, which having come down to the writer's

* Comp. Judges i. 27, 28, with Josh. xvii. 11-13; Judges i. 29, with Josh. xvi. 10; Judges ii. 6-9, with Josh. xxiv. 28-31,

day, he incorporated it into his book, prefixing to it, in what now constitutes the fourth chapter, the history which tradition or record had connected with it, as its *argument*.* The accounts of Gideon and his family

* I cannot resist the suspicion, that the author of the fourth chapter, in his account of the occasion on which the Ode in the fifth was written, has confounded the war of Deborah and Barak against Sisera, mentioned in it, with that previous war of Joshua against Jabin, king of Hazor, in which the Israelites had totally overthrown the power of that prince (Josh. xi. 1–13). The Ode, let it be observed, says not a word of Jabin. — Its singular beauty is so disguised in our translation, that the English reader will be gratified to see it in a more worthy dress. Several versions have been made. The following, taken from Milman's "History of the Jews," is for the most part sufficiently literal, and well represents the vigor and spirit of the original. Mr. Milman prefaces it with this analysis; "The solemn religious commencement,—the picturesque description of the state of the country,—the mustering of the troops from all quarters,—the sudden transition to the most contemptuous sarcasm against the tribes that stood aloof,—the life, fire, and energy of the battle,—the bitter pathos of the close,—lyric poetry has nothing, in any language, which can surpass the boldness and animation of this striking production."

"Thus sang Deborah and Barak, son of Abinoam,
In the day of victory thus they sang;
That Israel hath wrought her mighty vengeance,
That the willing people rushed to battle,
O, therefore, praise Jehovah!

"Hear, ye kings! give ear, ye princes!
I to Jehovah, I will lift the song,
I will sound the harp to Jehovah, God of Israel!

"Jehovah! when thou wentest forth from Seir!
When thou marchedst through the fields of Edom!
Quaked the earth, and poured the heavens,
Yea, the clouds poured down with water;
Before Jehovah's face the mountains melted,
That Sinai before Jehovah's face,
The God of Israel.

"In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In Jael's days, untrodden were the highways,
Through the winding by-path stole the traveller;
Upon the plains deserted lay the hamlets,
Even till that I, till Deborah arose,
Till I arose in Israel a mother.

"They chose new gods;
War was in all their gates!

(of the tribe of Manasseh), and of Samson, a descendant of Dan, were still more full, occupying, each of them, four chapters. In recording the former account, the

Was buckler seen, or lance,
'Mong forty thousand sons of Israel ?

" My soul is yours, ye chiefs of Israel !
And ye, the self-devoted of the people,
Praise ye the Lord with me !
Ye that ride upon the snow-white asses ;
Ye that sit to judge on rich divans ;
Ye that plod on foot the open way,
Come meditate the song.

" For the noise of plundering archers by the wells of water,
Now they meet and sing aloud Jehovah's righteous acts ;
His righteous acts the hamlets sing upon the open plains,
And enter their deserted gates the people of Jehovah.

" Awake, Deborah ! awake !
Awake, uplift the song !
Barak, awake ! and lead thy captives captive,
Thou son of Abinoam !

" With him a valiant few went down against the mighty,
With me Jehovah's people went down against the strong.

" First Ephraim, from the Mount of Amalek,
And after thee, the bands of Benjamin !
From Machir came the rulers of the people,
From Zebulun those that bear the marshal's staff ;
And Issachar's brave princes came with Deborah,
Issachar, the strength of Barak ;
They burst into the valley on his footsteps.

" By Reuben's fountains there was deep debating ;
Why sat'st thou idle, Reuben, 'mid thy herd-stalls ?
Was it to hear the lowing of thy cattle ?
By Reuben's fountains there was deep debating.

" And Gilead lingered on the shores of Jordan ;
And Dan, why dwelled he among his ships ?
And Asher dwelled in his seashore havens,
And sat upon his rocks precipitous.
But Zebulun was a death-defying people,
And Naphtali from off the mountain heights.

" Came the king and fought,
Fought the kings of Canaan,
By Taanach, by Megiddo's waters,
For the golden booty that they won not.

writer, in preference to mutilating what had come into his hands as one whole, appears to have allowed himself to be led aside from his subject, in relating, in the history of the sons of Gideon, what had nothing to do

" From the heavens they fought 'gainst Sisera,
In their courses fought the stars against him ;
The torrent Kishon swept them down,
That ancient river Kishon.
So trample thou, my soul, upon their might.

" Then stamped the clattering hoofs of prancing horses
At the flight, at the flight of the mighty.

" Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord,
Curse, a twofold curse upon her dastard sons ;
For they came not to the succour of Jehovah,
To the succour of Jehovah 'gainst the mighty.
Above all women blest be Jael,
Heber the Kenite's wife,
O'er all the women blest, that dwell in tents.

" Water he asked,— she gave him milk,
The curded milk, in her costliest bowl.

" Her left hand to the nail she set,
Her right hand to the workman's hammer ;
Then Sisera she smote, — she clave his head ;
She bruised, — she pierced his temples.
At her feet he bowed ; he fell ; he lay ;
At her feet he bowed ; he fell ;
Where he bowed, there he fell dead.

" From the window she looked forth, she cried,
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice ;
' Why is his chariot so long in coming ?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariot ? '
Her prudent women answered her, —
Yea, she herself gave answer to herself, —
' Have they not seized, not shared the spoil ?
One damsel, or two damsels to each chief ?
To Sisera a many-colored robe,
A many-colored robe, and richly brodered,
Many-colored, and brodered round the neck.'

" Thus perish all thine enemies, Jehovah ;
And those who love thee, like the sun, shine forth,
The sun in all its glory."

Lord Byron, in the " Giaour," has imitated some of the lines towards the close ;

" His mother looked from her lattice high," &c.

with the evils, consequent upon the sins of the nation, incurred by it at foreign hands. In the collection of anecdotes respecting Samson, in which again we trace but a very feeble connexion with the great plan of the book, it appears probable, as has been already remarked, that two authorities were used, the sketch of his adventures in connexion with Delilah being from a source distinct from the other. What is told of Jephthah of Gilead,* a member of that branch of Manasseh which was settled eastward of the river, is embraced in somewhat more than one chapter; while Tola of Issachar, Jair of Manasseh,† Elon of Zebulun, and Abdon of Ephraim, contribute nothing to the history, beyond the most concise memoranda respecting the length of their administrations, the amount of their wealth, the number of their families, and the state which they maintained.

In the introductory chapter, where an account is given of the position of the western tribes among their Canaanitish neighbours, no mention is made of Issachar; and not only are the fortunes of Simeon and Asher, two other of the tribes assigned to the western district, passed over in utter silence in the body of the work, but the same remark holds good of Reuben and Gad, though, as has been observed, some of the invaders must have passed through their territory, to reach those

* It is said (xi. 1), that "Gilead begat Jephthah," and that he was the brother of sons whom "Gilead's wife bare (xi. 2)." But the great-granddaughters of Gilead were contemporary with Moses (Numb. xxvii. 1), and of course the writer intended to say, that Jephthah, whom he places three hundred years after Moses (Judges, xi. 26), was a remote descendant of Gilead, and not his son. Accordingly, the phraseology of this text confirms the argument above, at p. 124, note.

† It may be, that this Jair, spoken of in x. 3-5, is but a fabulous character, tradition having framed the account of him from what is recorded by Moses (Numb. xxxii. 41) of a person who gave his name to the hamlets, called *Havoth-Jair*.

western divisions of the country, which they are expressly related to have overrun.

In a few instances, we find in this book, as in the preceding, references to ancient monuments, natural and artificial, as continuing to bear witness to the events recorded; * and, repeatedly, the structure of the story is such as to suggest the probability of its having had its origin in some legendary fragment, whether in poetry or prose. Such instances occur in the riddle propounded by Samson, and his answer to those who brought its solution; † in his words of exultation after slaying a thousand men with a bone; ‡ in the parable attributed to Jotham; § and in the song of Deborah and Barak, which may very naturally be supposed to be older than the narrative now prefixed to it, and to have furnished the hints which are expanded in that narrative. In the ballads and legends of all nations the comic element has its place. They are compositions of that kind, that they by no means reject, but on the contrary favor, a strain of grotesque and whimsical exaggeration. They permit their author's imagination to run riot in the wildest improbabilities, and group the strangest contrasts; they are the *arabesque* of writing; and I cannot but think, that it was in this vein, that much of the account of the exploits of Samson was composed.

It follows, from the remarks which have been made, if taken for correct, that it is very little of historical truth which a cautious reader may assure himself that he can extract from the book of Judges. Thus much only may, in such a case, be taken for certain,—that the

* Judges ii. 5; vi. 24; vii. 25; xv. 19; see also ix. 6 (comp. Josh. xxiv. 26); xi. 39, 40.

† xiv. 14, 18.

‡ xv. 16.

§ ix. 7-20.

traditions of a nation cannot be in error respecting the general character of its condition at a given period. If, during that time, it enjoyed an undisturbed tranquillity, and was prospering in the arts of peace, it is impossible that there should go down to later ages an account of its having been then the troubled scene of bloody revolutions. If, on the contrary, it was devastated by wars, or crushed under a foreign yoke, the ages that have so suffered will not permit posterity to be misinformed concerning facts so pregnant with influences upon itself. That the ages which succeeded Joshua were ages of great disorder and disaster, of wars and revolutions, — that they witnessed internal strifes and foreign oppressions, relieved by feats of heroic daring, vigorous united efforts, and intervals of prosperity and repose, — so much I conceive, may be safely inferred from this book, in an application of the principles usually applied to compositions of the class to which I understand it to belong. That the heroes, who, from time to time, led the Jewish armies to victory, bore the names ascribed to them, and belonged to the tribes to which their origin is traced, may also be regarded as in the highest degree probable.

To advance another step; that the enemies and invaders of the Jews, during this period, were in fact the nations which are specified as such, there would be no propriety, I conceive, in questioning. But here an important distinction is to be made. The reasons which call on us to adopt the narrative in respect to the general fact, which it alleges, of invasions of the Jewish territory on the part of these nations, will not bear us out in going any further, and believing, on its authority, that they each overran and pillaged the whole country, and held it in bondage for a long succession of years. For these statements correspond precisely with the sort

of additions which, in the course of time, would be likely to be made. It is in the highest degree unlikely, that a nation, so powerful as the Jews showed themselves when they occupied Palestine, in comparison with all their neighbours there, should so soon be subjugated by one after another of those neighbours; that they should, notwithstanding, be left by their successive masters in a condition to rise and recover their liberty as often as deprived of it; that each nation, warlike and ambitious enough thus to conquer and enslave them, should, in its turn, give way to another, also in the vicinity, yet that their attempts upon Judea should produce no mutual collisions; that one of these nations should be a mere fragment of a people, which, a hundred years before, in its full strength, the Jews had overpowered, and slaughtered, or driven away;* — these things, and many others of the same sort, described in the book, or necessarily incident to what is there described, must be owned to be to the last degree improbable.

On the other hand, while it is, on all accounts, to be presumed, that there was a foundation for what tradition reported of inroads or insurrections of those nations, nothing is more likely, than that tradition would build a structure of exaggeration on the basis of authentic fact. That result takes place in the common, well-ascertained course of things. And all is reconciled, if we understand, that, during this period of imperfect organization and unsettled government, the neighbouring nations, from time to time, gave serious annoyance to the newly-established Israelites, invading portions of their country in predatory excursions, and overpowering, for a while, the inhabitants of one or another dis-

* Comp. Judges iv. 2, with Josh. xi. 10.

trict, who, under impulses of patriotic gratitude and pride, indulged their imaginations in what they conveyed to posterity concerning the prowess of the leader, under whose conduct they had expelled the foe.

Though, in the history of Samson, and in that of Gideon's family, we find departures from the scheme of the book, as it is announced near the beginning, and in the main pursued through the first sixteen chapters, those passages have a certain connexion with the rest, and may, perhaps, be properly regarded as no more than episodes. The same cannot be said of the two narratives contained in the last five chapters. These have no other connexion with what precedes, than as the scene of them is laid in the times before there was a "king in Israel";* and neither from the character of their contents, nor the style of the composition, is there reason to suppose, that they proceeded from the same author with the rest of the book. On the other hand, the two narratives in question, resembling each other in style, and bearing upon the same topic, that of the state of disorder and crime which called for the establishment of regal government, were probably the work of one hand. It was not unnatural, that, — independent composition as originally they were, — the fact of their relating to, and illustrating the condition of, the same period with the larger work, should cause them eventually to be attached to it as appendixes; but when it was, that they were fully incorporated with it, whether at the period when the whole Old Testament collection was arranged under as many heads as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet,

* Compare, however, Judges xviii. 2, with xvi. 31. I merely note the fact of the repetition, in these two independent passages, of the names of two Danite cities, without perceiving that it can be made the foundation of any inference.

or at an earlier time, we cannot now so much as conjecture. From the abrupt manner in which the first of the two histories begins, it is natural to regard it as having come into the compiler's hands in an imperfect state; and the unfavorable aspect, under which the latter presents the tribe of Benjamin, suggests the propriety of referring its publication to a time after the line of Saul, who belonged to that tribe, was deposed from the throne.* As to the tone and spirit of the writer, his attachment to royalty is sufficiently manifest. It may be thought worth suggesting, that there is in his work an under-current of sarcasm, directed against the Levitical order. That order supplies one of the principal characters in both of his narratives. In the first, the Levite is a reckless and mercenary adventurer; in the second, he is a gross and hard-hearted sensualist.†

The book of Judges does not mention the "book of the Law," and from this fact some critics would deduce an argument unfavorable to the authenticity of

* Some writers, on account of the mention of "the captivity of the land," as a past event, in Judges xviii. 30, are disposed to refer the origin of the latter portion of the book to a period as late as that of the deportation of the ten northern tribes. But it seems not at all improbable, that the author would use such language in reference to any subjugation recent at the period when he wrote, such as that in Eli's time (comp. 1 Sam. iv. 10; Psalm lxxviii. 58-61). The principal argument for an earlier origin of this part is found in the freedom of its language from Chaldee forms.

† The Levite, in one of the last two accounts, and the Levite's concubine in the other, both belonged to Bethlehem in Judah, which was the birth-place of David. Is it possible, that we are to gather from this, that the writer was unfriendly to him, or to the Bethlehemites in general? Also, he speaks of the time when "there was no king in Israel," which became the appropriate name of the northern kingdom. May it be conjectured from this, that he wrote in that kingdom? Once more; the place where the crime against the Levite is represented to have been committed (Judges xix. 14) was that of Saul's residence. Was the writer disaffected to the family of Saul? I but throw out these hints, without pretending that they are of any value.

the latter. But, considering the nature of the single narratives of which the book is made up, there was no more occasion for them to mention the Pentateuch, than there would have been for the Psalms, for instance, to speak of the national military muster-roll. And, on the other hand, if I have expounded rightly the main purport of the work, it is no less than a virtual argument from facts, to show the fulfilment of what the Law had announced.

The book, on the history of which we have been speculating, was probably, at the time of its production, unimportant and obscure. He who compares its miscellaneous contents and mean style with the beautiful poems of David, collected in the book of Psalms, and refers it, or the principal part of it, to nearly the same age with the latter, must needs own, that the writer could have had but little share in the high culture of the time. It is true, that we do not know that a better history of the period between Joshua and the monarchy ever existed ; but neither from that circumstance, nor any other, can we infer, that the history, now in our hands, enjoyed a high reputation, during that flourishing period of the Jewish state when its merits could best be estimated. The reason why we have no adequate record of an important period cannot always be given. It is enough to say, that it sometimes happens, that ages, fruitful in events, find no worthy historian ; and also, that valuable works perish, while those of a greatly inferior character survive. I add, that, during the time of the highest civilization of the Jews, the genius of their writers seems to have been much more for other kinds of composition, than for history.

LECTURE XXX.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MONARCHY.

1 SAMUEL I. 1. — XII. 25.

SUBJECT OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL. — RECENT DATE OF THE DIVISION INTO TWO BOOKS. — QUESTION RESPECTING THEIR AUTHORITY. — ABSENCE OF PROOF OF THE DIVINE ILLUMINATION OF THEIR AUTHOR, WHETHER SOUGHT IN THE FACT OF THEIR BEING EMBRACED IN THE CANON, IN TESTIMONY BORNE TO THEM BY THE NEW TESTAMENT, OR IN WHAT IS KNOWN OF THEIR ORIGIN. — INQUIRY RESPECTING THE TIME OF THEIR COMPOSITION. — OUTLINE OF THEIR CONTENTS. — BIRTH AND YOUTH OF SAMUEL. — DIVINE DENUNCIATIONS AGAINST THE FAMILY OF ELI. — BATTLE WITH THE PHILISTINES. — DEATH OF ELI'S SONS, — CAPTURE OF THE ARK, — AND HIS OWN DEATH. — MIRACLES WROUGHT FOR THE RESCUE OF THE ARK. — CIRCUMSTANCES OF ITS RESTORATION TO THE ISRAELITES. — VICTORIES OVER THE PHILISTINES. — JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION OF SAMUEL. — MISCONDUCT OF HIS SONS. — PROPOSAL OF A MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT. — SAUL'S JOURNEY, AND FIRST INTERVIEW WITH SAMUEL. — HIS UNCTION AS FUTURE KING OF ISRAEL, — AND RETURN TO HIS HOME. — ASSEMBLY AT MIZPEH, AND ELEVATION OF SAUL TO THE THRONE. — HIS VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES. — ABDICATION OF SAMUEL. — REFLECTIONS UPON THE CONTENTS OF THESE CHAPTERS. — IMPROBABILITY OF SOME REPRESENTATIONS; — DISCORDANCE BETWEEN OTHERS. — QUESTION RESPECTING THE BEARING OF CERTAIN OMISSIONS AND STATEMENTS IN THESE BOOKS ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE PENTATEUCH. — ALLEGED OMISSIONS. — ALLEGED EXISTENCE OF CUSTOMS NOT PRESCRIBED BY THE LAW. — ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW BY THE NATION, AND BY INDIVIDUALS.

WITH the exception of what is contained in the book of Judges, we have no account of the Jewish history between the time of the occupation of Canaan and the period immediately preceding the establishment of the monarchy. Of the two books of Samuel,

so called, the first treats of the life and administration of that eminent person, including part of the pontificate of Eli; and of the life and reign of Saul, embracing the early history of David. The sole reign of David, previous to his son Solomon's being associated with him in the royal dignity, makes the subject of the whole of the second book. This latter is not, however, throughout, a continuous history, the last four chapters bearing a relation to the preceding composition, substantially the same as that of the last two narratives in the book of Judges to the rest of that work.

When we speak of a first and second book of Samuel, we recognise a distinction existing in the present editions. There is, however, no reason to suppose, that they were originally so divided. The assertion of Origen and Jerome, that the Jews of their times reckoned the two as one,* I do not consider as very material in this connexion, inasmuch as, in some respects, the Jewish classification of books was arbitrary, having regard to the number of letters in the alphabet. Nor is it a decisive fact, that the style and structure of the two parts are similar, and the narrative continuous as far as to the beginning of the appendixes in the last four chapters. But the Hebrew manuscripts present no break at the end of the thirty-first chapter. It was first introduced into the Hebrew copies in the printed edition of the Bombergs,† for the purpose of conformity to the arrangement of the Vulgate Latin version.

The great question, which has before occurred, in other applications, presents itself here again in relation to this portion of the Jewish records. On what authority does this history come down to us? Is it to

* Origen, apud Euseb. "Hist. Eccles." Lib. vi. cap. 25; Hieron, "Prologus Galeatus."

† See Vol. I. p. 61.

be received, as the work of a writer composing under divine dictation or supervision, and therefore secure against error? Is it the work of one, who, through merely human, but still adequate means of information, had attained to a perfect and exact comprehension of his subject, and who, on that ground, is to be regarded as, in all particulars, a trust-worthy witness? Or is it, lastly, the production of an author, who, living in an age considerably subsequent to that of the events which he records, collected such materials as tradition or earlier records had brought into his hands, and executed his work with such completeness and precision as these permitted?

Whoever maintains the first of these theories, takes the burden of proof upon himself. That a book, ancient or modern, comes to us, with its contents, under a direct divine authority, is by no means a fact to be assumed; nor is it any thing to plead in favor of such a view, that it has had some friends among Jews, and many among Christians. By what medium of proof is such a conclusion to be reached? Shall we say, that these books were written under divine direction or superintendence, because they are found in what we call the Jewish Canon? Before we take this ground, we must be prepared to prove, that therein we have a collection of books of this description, and of such books only; a theory, which, as I have formerly shown, is altogether without good foundation. Limiting our view to the book before us, shall we maintain, that its author was a man divinely inspired to write it? This we must be prepared to do, if at all, in one or the other of two ways; either by showing, that, whether named or unnamed, he has been declared to be so inspired on other sufficient authority; or else, by showing who he was, and proving the fact from his own history.

These methods of proof are both equally out of the question. So far is the New Testament from bearing testimony to any supernatural authority of the books of Samuel, that it does not so much as once name them, nor ever quote them, if it quote them at all, except for historical statements, which it required no supernatural advantages to register, and which, had there been no written record, might have been handed down by popular tradition.* And concerning their author we are entirely in the dark. History has not preserved his name. There is not so much as ground for a plausible conjecture on the subject. Further; whoever he was, he never makes, nor so much as remotely implies, a claim to supernatural illumination. It is merely a claim which others, in modern times,—a portion of the Jews, through their superstitious veneration for antiquity, and the mass of Christians, partly through their reverence for Jewish opinions, and partly through an erroneous view of the import of some few sentences in the Christian Scriptures,—have set up for him, as well as for all the writers of the books in the same collection.

If we know nothing of the author of these books, are we any better informed respecting the time when he lived? If so, we can command some aid for estimating the goodness of his materials and the correct-

* It is probable, that Heb. i. 5, refers to 2 Sam. vii. 14. If, in Acts xiii. 22, there is an allusion to 1 Sam. xiii. 14, it is nothing like an accurate citation, but merely an appeal to the fact, that God had resolved to supersede Saul by David, and a repetition of one expression, said to have been used by Samuel in announcing this purpose. If, in Mark ii. 25, 26, and the parallel passages, there is a reference to the record now in our hands (which I shall not dispute, though the reader, in that case, is to reconcile the mention of Abiathar as high priest, in Mark ii. 25, with 1 Sam. xxi. 1), still, in this case again, to appeal to it for a simple historical fact, was manifestly a very different thing from vouching for its supernatural authority. See also Heb. xi. 32, 33.

ness of his representations; inasmuch as the more time tradition has to do its work of embellishment and corruption, before it is incorporated into a permanent record, the wider, other things being equal, may we expect to find the departures which it has made from the original verity.

It has been a common opinion among the critics, that the books of Samuel, besides making one together, were also originally but parts of one composition with the first and second books of Kings. There is great probability in this view. The Alexandrine version, the oldest external authority of any kind upon the subject, numbers the four, successively, as the Four Books of Kings; and the same was the arrangement of Jerome in the Vulgate. They exhibit all the similarity of style that could be looked for in books, which are themselves partly compilations of foreign matter.* Between the four, taken together, there is also a unity of plan, and substantially an unbroken connexion. The second book of Samuel pursues the memoir of David almost to the close of his life, but his last acts and his death are recorded at the beginning of the first book of Kings; a fact hardly to be accounted for, except on the supposition, that both originally made parts of one work. Nor does the remark, which has been made, that, "if the history is uninterrupted, the narrative is not"† (its course being broken by the insertion of the appendixes at the end of the second book of Samuel), prove any thing against the correctness of this view. There is no

* I cannot, in this argument, ascribe the importance that others have done, to references in the books of Kings to matter contained in those of Samuel (E. g. comp. 1 Kings ii. 26, with 1. Sam. ii. 35; 1 Kings ii. 11, with 2 Sam. v. 5; 1 Kings ii. 4, viii. 18, 25, with 2 Sam. vii. 12-16). But, for a striking example of similarity in the form of narration, comp. 1 Kings iv. 1-6, with 2 Sam. viii. 15-18.

† De Wette, "Einleitung in das A. T." § 186.

reason why an ancient author should not proceed in a way, which we know to be freely taken by modern authors, arranging, at the close of some chapter or section, additional matter, which could not be conveniently introduced into the body of the work. And, supposing all to have proceeded from the same hand, the events in question, belonging as they do to the reign of David, would not have been so suitably placed at the close of his biography, since, before his death, the reign of his son Solomon had begun.

If the books of Kings and those of Samuel originally made parts of the same composition, then the origin of the books of Samuel is to be referred to a period more than four hundred years later than the latest of the events which they record, and more than five hundred years later than the earliest of those events; inasmuch as the history is brought down, in the second book of Kings, to a period subsequent to the Babylonian conquest.

But, not to rest on the strong probability, that the date of the composition of the books of Kings, thus far satisfactorily ascertained, is also to be taken for that of the books of Samuel, it at all events appears, from intimations in these books themselves, that they were composed at a period considerably subsequent to the occurrence of the events recorded in them. The writer speaks of laws, customs, monuments, names, and political relations,—of which he describes the origin,—as continuing “unto this day.”* He explains the introduction of a proverbial form of expression, current among his contemporaries.† He refers to a peculiarity of language obsolete in his time, but in use at the pe-

* 1 Sam. v. 5; vi. 18; xxvii. 6; xxx. 25; 2 Sam. iv. 3; vi. 8.

† 1 Sam. x. 12; xix. 24.

riod of which he is treating.* In speaking of a certain city as having become the property of David, and adding, that it “pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day,”† he implies, that he lived at a period considerably subsequent to that, when Judah became a separate monarchy; and instances are pointed out of his use of a Chaldee idiom,‡ indicating, that he wrote at least as late as the time when the vocabulary of the Jews had been affected by their free intercourse with the people of Chaldea.

It is further unquestionable, that, in his compilation, the writer has used authorities which give different representations of the same event, and which he has taken no pains to reconcile, probably because, perceiving the time to be past, when it was possible to ascertain the circumstantial truth, no better resource remained to him, than to allow the existing authorities to speak for themselves. Where different authorities treated of the same particulars, their agreement would confirm whatever they represented alike; and as to points, respecting which their representations were inconsistent, a collation of them would show the existence of an uncertainty, which there were no longer means to remove.

The first book of Samuel opens with an account of miraculous circumstances, said to have attended the birth of that eminent person. Eli, a descendant of Ithamar,§ was now high priest, that dignity, for some reason of which we are not informed, having, since the

* 1 Sam. ix. 9.

† xxvii. 6.

‡ In i. 1; xxv. 14, the numeral is used for the indefinite article.

§ This, at least, is inferred from a comparison of three texts. Ahimelech, “son of Ahitub” (1 Sam. xxii. 20), is said (1 Chron. xxiv. 3) to have been “of the sons of Ithamar”; and Ahitub is said (1 Sam. xiv. 3) to have been grandson of Eli. Comp. Josephus, “Antiq.” Lib. v. cap. 11, § 5.

days of Phinehas, who was son of Eleazar, been transferred from the elder to the younger line of the posterity of Aaron. A devout Levite, named Elkanah,* came from his home at Mount Ephraim, according to his custom, "to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh." He was accompanied by his two wives, of whom Hannah, the most beloved, was childless. Their sacrifice ended, she remained by the Tabernacle, and "in bitterness of soul prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore," and made a vow, that, if a son should be given her, she would "give him unto the Lord all the days of his life," according to the rules of the consecration of a Nazarite. Eli had been observing the signs of her emotion, and, misunderstanding it, would have repulsed her rudely; but when it had been explained, dismissed her to her home with a blessing. There she at length became the mother of a son, to whom, in acknowledgment of her prayer having been favorably heard, she gave the name of Samuel. When the child had been weaned, he was brought by his parents to Shiloh, and dedicated there to the service of the Tabernacle, under the guardianship of the high priest. And a hymn is recorded, in which Hannah, on this occasion, is said to have given expression to her grateful and exulting feelings.†

* That Samuel was of a Levitical family is inferred from 1 Chron. vi. 22-28, 33-35; but of these passages in their place.

† 1 Sam. i. 1—ii. 11.—"Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord" (i. 9; comp. iii. 3). This name would scarcely have been given to the Tabernacle by any one who wrote before the Temple (properly so called) was erected, and its name had become familiar. There is no anachronism in representing Eli as sitting by "a post of the temple"; comp. Ex. xxvi. 32, 37.—"There shall no razor come upon his head" (11); comp. Numb. vi. 5.—"The Lord . . . shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed" (1 Sam. ii. 10); there have been various conjectures as to what could be the meaning of Hannah in these words, but they all rest on a *petitio prin-*

The extortions and profligacy of the sons of Eli, who were associated with him in the sacerdotal office, disgusted the people, and discouraged them from bringing to the Tabernacle the sacrifices required by the Law ; nor did the remonstrances of their pious father avail any thing towards arresting their vicious career. A divine messenger, under these circumstances, accosted Eli, and, expostulating with him on the wickedness of his sons, predicted their speedy death, and the future deposition of his family from the priesthood, their fall into obscurity and indigence, and the short lives of all their number. Another admonition followed, in a still more impressive form. Samuel, retiring to repose in the precincts of the Tabernacle, was addressed by the voice of Jehovah himself, informing him, that the culpable remissness of Eli, in respect to his parental duties, was to be visited with signal vengeance. "I have sworn unto the house of Eli," said the voice, "that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." Yielding to the importunity of the high priest, Samuel made known to him the mournful import of this communication ; and, from that time, "all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." *

cipi in respect to the important fact, that the words were actually used by her. It is probable, that, making this record after the establishment of the kingdom, the writer meant to represent her as having spoken prophetically of the future anointed monarchs ; comp. 35.

* 1 Sam. ii. 12 — iii. 21. — "I will raise me up a faithful priest" &c. (ii. 35) ; the author, writing long after the investiture, by Solomon, of Zadok instead of Abiathar, in the high priesthood (1 Kings ii. 26, 35), adopts a history, which had prevailed, of this restoration of the elder branch to its hereditary rights having been predicted as long ago as before the foundation of the monarchy. — "The word of the Lord was precious in those days ; there was no open vision" (1 Sam. iii. 1) ; Dathē, Geddes, and others, more exactly render ; "In those days divine oracles were rare ; visions were not frequent" — "When Eli was laid

A war raged between the Israelites and the Philistines; and, the Israelitish forces suffering a defeat, a proposal was made to obtain the presence of the ark of the covenant, for security against future disaster. "So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there, with the ark of the covenant of God." For a moment its arrival in the camp intimidated the Philistine host; "they said, 'God is come into the camp'; and they said, 'Woe unto us, for there hath not been such a thing heretofore; woe unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.'" But, speedily recovering from their panic, they defeated the Israelites with a slaughter of "thirty thousand footmen," and the ark, which had so awed them, fell into their hands. Eli sat by the gate of Shiloh, waiting for tidings from the battle, and trembling for the safety of "the ark of God." A messenger from the routed host, "with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head," rushed into the city, and to his anxious inquiry "answered and said, 'Israel is fled before the

down in his place, and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep" (2, 3); it is, perhaps, commonly understood here, that Samuel is represented as retiring to rest within the Tabernacle; a place, into which, even if a Levite, he could not lawfully go. But nothing of the kind is said. "Samuel was laid down to sleep," but where we are not told, though the context shows, that it must have been near the Tabernacle. The previous part of the verse, I understand to indicate only the time, as being towards morning, at which hour the lamps were trimmed, to be lighted again in the evening (comp. Ex. xxx. 7, 8). When Samuel went, after daybreak, to draw the outer curtain of the Tabernacle, or, perhaps, to open the doors of the court which inclosed the area where it stood, an opportunity was presented for Eli to confer with him (1 Sam. iii. 15, 16).

Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.' And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off his seat backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy; and he had judged Israel forty years." When the intelligence reached the wife of his son Phinehas, she was seized with premature travail, and died in giving birth to a son, to whom, in allusion to the affliction of the time, was given the name *Ichabod*, "*The glory has departed.*" *

The captive ark, conveyed to Ashdod, was deposited in the temple of the idol Dagon, confronting the image of the god. Jehovah did not delay to repel such an affront to the majesty of his own special presence. "When they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen on his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord, and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold;

* 1 Sam. iv. 1–22. — "Israel pitched beside Ebenezer" (1); the place, however, is said to have received that name on a subsequent occasion (vii. 12). — "The gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness" (iv. 8); some critics have imagined, that they found here something wherewith to discredit the account of the plagues in Exodus. But they forget, that it is Philistine soldiers that are speaking, who cannot be supposed to be very accurately informed respecting the interpositions of the Divine Being in behalf of the Israelites, and their own priests appear, a little further on (vi. 6), to have been better acquainted with the truth of the case. — "She named the child Ichabod" (iv. 21); אִיכָבֹֿד, *Where is the glory?* It is not obvious, why the writer should have taken the pains to record these circumstances of the birth of Ichabod, who takes no place in the later history.

only the stump of Dagon was left to him ; therefore, neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day." *

Nor was this the only token of the indignation of Jehovah. A loathsome disease was made to spread still deeper consternation ; and, when the ark was removed successively to two other cities, still the grievous judgment followed. "There was a deadly destruction throughout all the city ; the hand of God was very heavy there ; the cry of the city went up to heaven." The people expostulated with the rulers on the madness of retaining the fatal trophy, and the rulers consulted "the priests and the diviners." By their advice, at the end of seven months after its capture, arrangements were made for sending back the throne of the offended Deity to its place, and propitiating him by a trespass-offering. Five mice of gold, corresponding in number to the Philistine lordships, and as many ingots, shaped so as to commemorate the disease which had spread such devastation, were placed in a coffer, and, with the ark, stored in "a new cart," to be drawn by "two milch kine, on which there had come no yoke," and from which their young had been removed. "If it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh," said the priests, "'then he hath done us this great evil ; but if not, then we shall know, that it is not his hand that smote us ; it was a chance that happened to us.' And the men took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right

* 1 Sam. v. 1-5.

hand or to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth-shemesh." *

It was the time of wheat-harvest, when the reapers of that place were rejoiced by the sight of the ark, so strangely retracing its way. "The cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone; and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the Lord. And the Levites," who had by this time assembled, "took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone, and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices, the same day unto the Lord." Their irreverent curiosity in looking into the ark was punished by the death of fifty thousand and seventy of their number. Daunted by such a calamitous visitation, they sent a request to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, that they would undertake its custody; thither it was transferred, and there it remained no less than twenty years.†

* 1 Sam. v. 6 — vi. 12. — "Five golden mice" (vi. 4); no ravages of mice are mentioned in the previous account as having made part of the supernatural infliction; but in the context (vi. 5) we find this implied. — "The kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh" (12); Beth-shemesh was a suitable place for the reception of the ark, as being (Josh. xxi. 16) a sacerdotal city.

† 1 Sam. vi. 13 — vii. 2. — "The great *stone of Abel*" (18); the words in italics are supplied by our translators; the original is אֶבֶן גָּדוֹל, *great Abel*. The word, signifying *stone*, is אֶבֶן *Aben*; *Abel* means *mourning*; a very probable suggestion is, that the Israelites gave to the great stone in question the name of *great mourning*, in allusion to the calamity recorded in the next verse. — "He smote the men of Beth-shemesh fifty thousand and threescore and ten men" (19); an enormous number to be punished for such an offence, or to have committed it. The Syriac version reads 5070, and Josephus 70 only, in which he is followed by three Hebrew manuscripts, collected by Kennicott. But that either of these was the original reading, and not an alteration introduced for the purpose of making the account more credible, will not be thought

The recent disaster afforded to Samuel a favorable opportunity for remonstrating with the people upon their unfaithfulness to Jehovah; and, at his instance, they kept a solemn fast in token of their repentance. The Philistines, hearing of their convocation for that purpose, marshalled a force to attack them; but, Samuel having offered a burnt-offering and prayers for their deliverance, "the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the cities, which the Philistines had taken from Israel, were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines." From this point may be dated the progress of the nation,—interrupted by some reverses, but never permanently checked,—towards that greatness which it reached in the days of David and Solomon.*

The country being thus settled, Samuel gave himself to the regular duties of a ruler in time of peace, and, in the fulfilment of these, was in the habit of visiting, every year, three central cities of the country. In his old age, oppressed with the cares of administration, he associated with him his two sons. Their corrupt official practices occasioned a discontent, which issued in that

likely by any one, who perceives how questionable are many other particulars of the narrative, and how prone the writer is to exaggeration.

* 1 Sam. vii. 3-14. — They "drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day" (6). This pouring out of water, a ceremony unknown to the Law, they probably intended as emblematic of their purpose to *cleanse* themselves from their past moral impurities. It was a symbolical act, of the same character with that prescribed in Deut. xxi. 6. The whole proceeding was a service of will-worship; they also "*fasted on that day*"; but the Law knew only one fast, that of the great day of expiation. — "Samuel took a stone, and called the name of it *Ebenezer*" (12); comp. iv. 1.

important measure, the establishment of regal authority. "The elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, 'Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us.'" "The thing displeased Samuel"; yet, asking for divine direction, he was told to yield to the request, but, at the same time, to "protest solemnly unto them," and apprise them what evils they were inviting, when they desired to submit themselves to a monarch's sway. Samuel made known to them the communication he had received of Jehovah's pleasure, and portrayed the tendencies of that despotism, by which, when it was too late, they would find themselves oppressed. But they did not know the worth of liberty; they persisted in their desire to be "like all the nations"; and, in obedience to the divine command, Samuel dismissed them to their homes, while he should take measures to execute their wish.*

At this time a Benjamite, named Kish, "had a son,

* 1 Sam. vii. 15–viii. 22. — "Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life" (vii. 15); perhaps, if we knew precisely what the author meant by these words, they would not appear contradictory to the subsequent statement of Samuel's having survived, by several years, Saul's elevation to the throne. — "He went, from year to year, in circuit, to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places; and his return was to Ramah" (16, 17); these four cities comprehended a very narrow circuit, being all within the limits of the tribe of Benjamin, unless by Mizpeh is intended (comp. Josh. xv. 38; xviii. 26; 1 Kings xv. 22) Mizpeh of Judah, which itself was not distant from the border of the other tribe. If it be asked, why Samuel, in his objections to the proposed change of government (1 Sam. viii. 11–18), did not refer to that passage of the Law (Deut. xvii. 14–20) which treats of the subject, it is obvious to reply, that possibly he did so, though, by reason of the brevity of the record, we are not so informed; but that probably he did not, because it would not have been to his purpose. Had he appealed to it, it would have been to show, that Moses had intended to discourage such a change; but the reply would have been at hand, that Moses had not forbidden it.

whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly," and distinguished from all the rest of the nation by his superior stature. Saul, attended by a servant, had gone in quest of some stray asses of his father, and, wandering on this errand into the neighbourhood of Ramah, was advised, by his companion, to go into that city, and, offering to "a man of God," who lived there, a small silver coin, to ask him what course they should take to recover the lost animals. On their way to find him, they met some maidens, who told them, that he was just about to hold a great public sacrifice and festival. At the gate they encountered Samuel, whom the Lord had informed, the day before, that on this day he was to see the future king of Israel, and who, at the moment of meeting, was divinely apprized, that that highly destined man stood before him. "Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, 'Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is'; and Samuel answered Saul, and said, 'I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day; and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart; and as for thine asses, that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them, for they are found.'"

Samuel, then proceeding to intimate to Saul the honor which awaited him, an honor to which the latter disclaimed any title, introduced him and his attendant to the banquet which had been prepared, "and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons; and Samuel said unto the cook, 'Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee;' and the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul; and Samuel said, 'Behold that which is left; set it before thee,

and eat; for unto this time hath it been kept for thee.’” *

Samuel, having introduced the future monarch, under such favorable circumstances, to the knowledge of the people, retired with him to his own house, and thence, at the dawn of the next morning, accompanying him a little out of the city, and sending the servant forward, that they might be alone, solemnly consecrated him, with the anointing oil, to be “captain over the Lord’s inheritance.” At the same time, apparently to satisfy Saul, that the person who addressed him enjoyed supernatural endowments, and might speak with authority, he forewarned him of three incidents which should befall in the course of that day. He would meet, at a specified place, two persons, who should inform him, that his father, no longer concerned for the loss of his property, was anxious for his too long absent son; at a certain spot further on, he would fall in with three others, laden with certain kinds of provision, a certain part of which they should give to him; and keeping on his way, till he came near a garrison of the Philistines, he would be accosted by “a company of prophets, coming down from the high place” with various musical instruments, and, “the spirit of the Lord” coming upon him, he would “prophesy with them, and be turned into another man. ‘And let it be,’” Samuel added, “‘when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion shall serve thee; for God is with thee; and thou shalt go down before me to

* 1 Sam. ix. 1–24. — “Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish,” &c. (1); it cannot but strike the reader as remarkable, that a history, in other particulars so precise, is silent respecting the birth-place of the first Israelitish monarch; nor does his genealogy appear to have been any better understood in after times; comp. 1 Sam. ix. 1; xiv. 51; 1 Chron. viii. 30, 33.

Gilgal, and, behold, I will come down unto thee.'
 And all those signs came to pass that day"; and on the occurrence of the last, "the people said one to another, 'What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?' Therefore it became a proverb, 'Is Saul also among the prophets.'" He accompanied the party, to which he had thus attached himself, to "the high place," whence they had come down to meet him; and there falling in with a relation, who made inquiries concerning his journey, he informed him that he had visited Samuel, and been told by him of the recovery of the animals of which he was in quest, "but of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not." *

It was at Ramah, his own home, that Samuel had had his conference with the elders of Israel, respecting the change of political constitution which they proposed. At Mizpeh he now convened the whole people to make definitive arrangements for that object, and, having again expressed his disapprobation of the measure, proceeded to ascertain, in their presence, by lot (as it would seem), the individual, on whom the royal

* 1 Sam. ix. 25 - x. 16. — "When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in [or, by] the border of Benjamin," &c. (x. 2). — "Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor," &c. (3). — "And all those signs came to pass that day" (9). There is here a strange confusion of geography. Saul had been with Samuel in some city of "the land of Zuph" (ix. 5), which is commonly understood to have been Ramah of the Zuphites (comp. i. 1), in the district of Benjamin. But, however that might be, proceeding on his way to his home, that is, to some place, — Gibeah (xiii. 16) or some other, — within the limits of his tribe, he is represented as first going to Rachel's sepulchre, which was near Bethlehem, south of Jerusalem, and within the limits of Judah (Gen. xxxv. 19); and then to Tabor, within the limits of Zebulun, which lay to the north, with the territory of four other tribes between it and Judah; and further, to have made all this circuit within one day.

dignity was to devolve. First, from among the tribes, that of Benjamin was taken; then, from that tribe, the family of Matri; and, lastly, from that family, Saul, the son of Kish. After searching for Saul in vain, the people “inquired of the Lord,” whether they were to expect his coming, and were divinely directed to the hiding-place whither he had withdrawn. Thence they brought him forth, and, while Samuel called their admiring attention to his lofty stature, they “shouted, and said, ‘God save the king.’” Samuel, before they were dispersed, took pains to explain to them the nature of the government under which they were henceforward to live, or to warn them anew of its threatening tendencies; and, for the greater explicitness, and more permanent utility, wrote the substance of his exposition “in a book, and laid it up before the Lord.” “And Saul also went home to Gibeah,” accompanied on his way by some well-disposed persons, but followed by expressions of discontent on the part of others, to which he was forbearing enough to give no heed.*

An opportunity soon occurred to win the popular favor, and establish himself in his newly-found authority. The king of the Ammonites having laid siege to a city of Gilead, the extraordinary agreement was made between him and its inhabitants, that they should have a week to send out expresses and summon aid, and that if, by the end of that time, it did not arrive, every man was to submit to the loss of his right eye “for a reproach upon all Israel.” “Then came the messengers

* 1 Sam. x. 17–27.—“Samuel told the people the *manner of the kingdom*” (25); this is commonly understood as declaring, that Samuel propounded a *constitution* of the monarchy in speech and writing; but, in view of the connexion of viii. 11, where the same expression is used, I have thought it necessary to propose a choice of interpretations in the text.

to Gibeah of Saul," and the tidings reached him "as he came after the herd, out of the field." He forthwith cut a yoke of oxen in pieces, and sent them in all directions with the threat, that whoever did not join him in arms should have his cattle treated in like manner. He soon found himself at the head of an immense force; "when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand." He sent to assure the besieged city of the relief which awaited it; and on the morning which had been agreed upon for the monstrous barbarity to be inflicted, he fell on the besieging army, and put to flight all whom he did not slay. In their admiration of his energy and success, the people would have taken vengeance upon those who had murmured at his elevation; but he refused to listen to the proposal, thus increasing, by his clemency, the enthusiasm which had been excited by his valor.*

Samuel, seeing the moment to be favorable for confirming the authority of one, who, if he were to reign at all, it was manifestly desirable, should reign with the advantage of an obedient and confiding spirit on his subjects' part, summoned the people to Gilgal, "to renew the kingdom there," with religious and festive rites. First, as incident to being superseded in his own authority, he called on them to witness how righteously and disinterestedly he had always exercised it. Next, he briefly recited the favors shown to them by their king, Jehovah; favors, which called for amore grateful return than that of deposing him from his royalty, but which Jehovah would still not cease to bestow, if, in their new relation, they would obey his voice. Then, to satisfy them of the authority with which he had

* 1 Sam. xi. 1-13.

spoken, "Samuel called unto the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day," though it was the time of "wheat harvest," when such weather was out of season; and, perceiving that the phenomenon had made the impression which he desired, he concluded by repeating his exhortations to obedience, and assuring the people of the Lord's continued favor, to be vouchsafed on that condition, and of his own continued readiness to benefit them with his counsels and prayers.*

We considered, at the beginning of this Lecture, the external evidence for the authority of the books of Samuel. We saw, that they were the production of a writer, perhaps always anonymous,—certainly, now unknown,—who lived at a period long subsequent to that of the events which he records. The survey, which we have now made of a part of their contents, may lead us to some conclusions,—subject to be confirmed or qualified by an examination of the residue,—concerning the question, whether they are to be taken as a result of divine communications, or as a true and exact record of historical facts otherwise made known to the writer, or as a collection of traditionary legends. Apart from those events, which, if they really occurred, were miracles, and miracles which it seems impossible to defend upon the principles of divine interposition, as expounded in my last Lecture, the attentive reader cannot fail to see, that others, which involve no supernatural agency, are destitute of internal marks of probability. Samuel is the judge, or chief ruler, of Israel; "all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba," had long known him as being "established to be a prophet of

* 1 Sam. xi. 14 — xii. 25. — "Jerubbaal and Bedan" (11); a *Bedan* is spoken of in 1 Chron. vii. 17; but whether the same who is here mentioned, does not appear.

the Lord"; for years he has gone "in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places;" and yet, when two Israelites, — and they, too, inhabitants of the same district, — are in search of some lost animals, one tells the other, as they come near to Samuel's residence, that there lives "a man of God" who may perhaps direct them, and they go together to find this august chief magistrate of Israel, and offer him a trifling fee to do them the office of a common fortune-teller. The inhabitants of a besieged city agree with the besieger, that, on a certain day, if not previously relieved, they will submit every man to the loss of his right eye; and, on the other hand, closely invested as they are, they are permitted to send out messengers to summon this relief, and the invaders wait till it has time to come and rout them. Saul, on his way from one city to another of the district of Benjamin, travels first into the territory of Judah, and then into that of Zebulun, and this too in one day. It is little to say, that relations such as these, if they are to be received, must be sustained by a different degree of evidence from what the external circumstances of credit, belonging to this history, supply.

At this stage of our examination of these books, I am not at liberty to affirm, that they were made up of materials derived from different sources, though this, I think, is a fact of which we shall find evidence as we proceed, and even already the reader may have made some observations inclining him to allow it. In the address of Samuel, on his abdication, he appears to refer the people's anxiety for a monarchical government to their apprehensions from an invasion of the Ammonites,* whereas not only, in their first application, had

* 1 Sam. xii. 12.

nothing been said or implied of such a motive, but the invasion of the Ammonites had been actually related to have taken place after the king was chosen.* Again, the account of that journey of Saul, in which he is represented to have been brought to his first interview with Samuel,† presents, even at first view, some appearance of having had a different origin from that of the context,—an appearance corroborated by a comparison with a passage which we have not yet reached. I will not insist on the appearance of deception, or, at least, of incongruity, in Samuel's ascertaining Saul, by lot, to be the destined king, after having received him with a distinction which implied a public recognition of him in that character.‡ But, towards the close of the account of the first interview at Ramah, Samuel is said to have proposed to meet Saul next at Gilgal, whereas, as the text is now arranged, their next meeting,—and that not an accidental one,—is at Mizpeh;§ and the narrative of the convocation of the people, at the latter place, connects perfectly well with that of their dismissal from Ramah, where they first solicited the appointment of a king,|| though the account of Saul's journey with his servant is now interposed between the two.¶

* I Sam. viii. 4, 5; comp. x. 24, xi. 1.

† ix. 1 — x. 16.

‡ With x. 20, 21, comp. ix. 22 — 24.

§ Comp. x. 8, with 17; also with xi. 14, and xiii. 8.

|| viii. 22.

¶ Following up a view submitted in a previous Lecture (see above, p. 225), that a writer of a later age would naturally have recourse, for historical materials, to the traditions of the several tribes, I may here suggest, that, in making up a history of Samuel, and of the early life, at least, of Saul, it might be expected that authorities would be sought in the tribe of Benjamin, within whose limits both resided. And it may be thought some indication that this was the fact, that the account of Samuel's *circuit in judging Israel* represents him as passing from Ramah "to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh" (Josh. xv. 38, xviii. 26), all cities in or near the district of the Benjamites; nor does it speak of provision

Having advanced thus far in our remarks upon the Early Prophets, it will be convenient to attend to some considerations helping to fix a standard by which to judge of the bearing of a portion of their contents upon the question of the authenticity of the Pentateuch. It has been maintained, that there are both omissions and statements to be observed in them, such as show, that what we call the Law of Moses was not in operation, — and therefore, it is to be inferred, not in existence, — till nearly the close of that period to which the history in the Early Prophets relates.

As to omissions, undoubtedly a very strong case needs to be made out, before they will furnish any weighty argument of this kind. It must be shown, not only that omissions exist, but that they exist under circumstances, where they are inconsistent with the existence of that which is brought into question. But the history contained in the Early Prophets, supposing the record to be ever so trustworthy, is not such as would naturally lead to a frequent mention, from first to last, of the Law or of the national worship. In a record of the political and martial movements of the Middle Ages, or of any ages, a reader does not expect often to find references to the forms of religious observance, or to the books of religious or municipal law. During the times to which the writings in question relate, justice was undoubtedly administered, and there were habits of social intercourse formed and practised upon from age to age. Yet how very scanty are the references to these great concerns of life, in a narrative of which, — as is usual in national histories, particularly those of ancient times, — the great material was in-

being made for judicial administration in any other place, except only, that two sons of Samuel were sent to Beersheba in Judah. Here is a character of that local history, to which a neighbourhood is all the world.

tended to be the events of politics and war. And, on the other hand, the book of Joshua, which there are the best reasons for believing to be the earliest in this collection, actually does contain express attestations to the existence and authority of the "book of the Law,"* and to numerous particulars of the Mosaic history and institutions;† the very subject of the principal part of the book of Judges (not to speak of allusions to the ritual of worship in that last portion, which is of later date) ‡ is the fulfilment of the predictions of Moses in respect to the condition of the people as consequent upon their conduct; and in that portion of the books of Samuel which has been under our notice, we have already found several references to the sacred ceremonial, as the Law of Moses had established it. §

References to the existence, at any period, of religious customs which the Law did not prescribe, have no force to disprove the existence of the Law at that period; for the disposition to will-worship, in certain states of society, will have its vent, not superseding, but adding to, a prescribed ceremonial. There is related to have been, in the time of the Judges, "a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly," || which Moses never appointed. But so there was a Feast of Purim, ¶ and a Feast of Dedication,** in later times, when no one doubts, that the Law, to which those celebrations were unknown, was in force. The tribes at Mizpeh "drew

* See Vol. I. p. 77. The early origin of the book of Joshua is accordingly disputed by the class of critics to whom I have alluded. See De Wette's "Beitrage zur Einleitung," &c. B. i. ss. 136–151.

† E. g. Josh. iii. 3–17; iv. 12, 13, 23; v. 2–9, 10–12; vi. 6 *et seq.*; viii. 30–35; xii. 1–6; xiv. 1 *et seq.*; xviii. 1; xx. 1–9; xxi. 1–8; xxii. 10–34; xxiii. 6 *et seq.*; xxiv. 26.

‡ Judges xvii. 13; xviii. 31; xx. 26, 27, 28.

§ E. g. 1 Sam. i. 3, 11, 24; ii. 13–17, 27, 28; iii. 3, 15; iv. 4; vi. 14, 15.

|| Judges xxi. 19.

¶ Esther ix. 28.

** John x. 22.

water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted.” * The fasting was a supererogatory service, as much as the libation. The law recognised only one annual fast; yet the Jews, when their professed devotion to that code was highest, “fasted often.” † The pouring out of water was, as has been before remarked, a significant symbol of repentance; nor can it, with any more plausibility, be argued, that that ceremony, because not enforced by the Law, implied ignorance of the Law on the part of those who performed it, than the same argument could be held in respect to the Jews of our Saviour’s time, who used baptism at the admission of a proselyte from Heathenism, and ate no “bread with unwashen hands.” ‡

It has been thought, that, according to representations in these books, there were sometimes more than one place of sacred convocation for the people, contrary to the strict command of Moses. § But of this I see no proof. The one place, to which Moses commanded sacrifices to be brought, was, of course, the one place, wherever that might be, where the ark and tabernacle stood for the time being. The tabernacle was a movable building. It was constructed with that very intent. Its place had been constantly changed in the wilderness, and Moses gave no law, requiring that it should become immediately stationary when brought to Canaan. Its original arrangements had also been made with a view to its speedy and convenient transfer from one place to another. Probably it did not require the labor of an hour to put it, and its furniture, in a condition to be removed. Under these circumstances, we are not to imagine, that any very extraor-

* 1 Sam. vii. 6.

† Luke v. 33.

‡ Mark vii. 5.

§ Lev. i. 3, 5; xvii. 1-9.

dinary occasion would be requisite, or even any occasion beyond one of slight and temporary convenience, to cause it to be removed, within short periods of time, to places not distant from each other; nor,—if we find the people meeting for religious offices, now at Shiloh, now at Shechem, then, after short intervals, at Mizpeh, Bethel,* Gilgal, and Kirjath-jearim, and again at other places, while this last was its regular station,—do these statements create any presumption whatever, that the people were worshipping in one place, and the ark, at the same time, was at another.

Again; it has been thought, that the ark and the tabernacle are sometimes represented as occupying different places, and that then (contrary to the Mosaic ordinance) both were regarded as consecrating the spot where they stood, and were resorted to for religious services. But neither of this do I find any evidence. I take it to be the uniform sense of the Law, that the ark itself, the virtual seat of Jehovah's presence, was to designate always, by its own presence, the place where acceptable worship might be rendered. The tabernacle was but its shelter, having no sanctity, except what it derived from the treasure which it inclosed. If, at any time, there was occasion for the Israelites to meet "before the Lord," without the presence of the ark, it was when the latter had been taken by the Philistines; but we then read nothing of the kind. As to its being "brought into" or "out of the house of Abinadab,"† I know of no direction of Moses, requiring, that, after

* The mention of Bethel, in this connexion, is an admission, that the words, which, in Judges xx. 18, 26, xxi. 2, our translators have rendered "house of God," ought to be understood as a proper name. This seems to me, on the whole, a reasonable admission, though not beyond dispute (comp. xxi. 19). See De Wette's "Beytrage" &c., B. i. ss. 230 *et seq.*

† 1 Sam. vii. 1; 2 Sam. vi. 4; comp. 10, 11, 1 Chron. xiii. 13, 14.

the passage through the wilderness should be effected, it should still occupy the tent provided for its accommodation on that journey ; nor does there appear any reason, why, under the altered circumstances, arrangement should not be made (as was done afterward, on a different scale) for its reception in a substantial edifice, while still the tabernacle might be kept ready for use on any occasion of temporary removal.*

Instances occur of acts of individuals, which were transgressions of religious duty, as Moses had defined it. But if Jephthah, in immolating his daughter, offered an unlawful sacrifice, it is plain, that we here see only the wild devotion of a rude robber, from which there would be much less plausibility in inferring, that the code of Moses was not yet in force, than in arguing from the *autos da fe* of the Holy Office, that the Christian Scriptures had not been produced. If Gideon "made an ephod,"† and Solomon "sacrificed and burned incense in high places,"‡ the way in which the acts of both are spoken of, so far from admitting the inference, that the Law was not then in existence, shows, that they were considered culpable for disobeying it. Several of the kings, both of Israel and of Judah, are charged with idolatry ; but we shall not be prepared to argue, that even this gross violation of the fundamental principle of the Law disproves its existence, unless we will say, that, when in Christendom there have been infidel monarchs, and even infidel Popes,

* This proceeds on the supposition, that the ark was actually carried *into* and *out* of the houses of Abinadab and Obed-edom, which is very probable. But the language will quite as well bear the construction, that it was brought *to* and *from* those houses, the tabernacle being pitched over it within their precincts. Nor, if any one should think, that the tabernacle, pitched by David on Mount Zion, was the identical tabernacle of the wilderness, is there any thing in the language of 2 Sam. vi. 17, nor even in that of 1 Chron. xv. 1, 3, xvi. 1, to refute him.

† Judges viii. 27.

‡ 1 Kings iii. 3.

the Gospel records could not have been extant. As to alleged violations of mere ritual propriety, if the men of Beth-shemesh offered the animals, which conveyed back the ark from its captivity : mong the Philistines, “a burnt-offering unto the Lord,”* it does not appear, that there was any thing illegal in their act, as being performed without the aid or presence of priests, for Beth-shemesh was a sacerdotal city.† If Samuel ‡ and Saul § are said to have erected altars, we do not know, that they were meant to sacrifice upon ; for aught that appears they were monumental structures, like that erected by the eastern tribes on the bank of the Jordan. || If Samuel, ¶ David,** and Elijah †† are said to have presented offerings, on the one hand, it is not in either of these cases clear, nor in any, except that of Elijah, strongly probable, that they did it without the aid of an officiating priest, or took any part but what is expressly assigned to the lay worshipper in the laws relating to the subject ; ‡‡ and, on the other hand, it is certain, that, whatever be our construction of those laws, the author of the books of Chronicles, whose scrupulous veneration for the Levitical system is manifest throughout his work, considered, that the office of the priest in sacrificing might, for sufficient cause, be delegated to others. §§ And at all events, single instances of such irregularity, supposing it to be certain that they occurred, afford a very feeble presumption against the earlier promulgation of the rules transgressed.

* 1 Sam. vi. 14.

† Josh. xxi. 16.

‡ 1 Sam. vii. 17.

§ 1 Sam. xiv. 35.

|| Josh. xxii.

¶ 1 Sam. vii. 9 ; xvi. 5.

** 2 Sam. vi. 13, 17.

†† 1 Kings xviii. 33.

‡‡ Lev. i. 2–5, 10, 11 ; iii. 1, 2, 7, 8, 12, 13, &c. The strict direction, in Numb. xvi. 40 relates, not to offering victims, but to burning incense.

§§ 2 Chron. xxix. 34. As to this point, of peculiar circumstances being understood to afford a justification of what, independently of them, would not be lawful, comp. 1 Sam. xxi. 6, with Matthew xii. 3, 4.

But further ; before a careful reasoner will feel justified in bringing such single facts, culled here and there from the records of the later ages, into the controversy respecting the authenticity of the Law, he will consider it to be his duty to inquire, whether he has sufficient evidence, that the facts themselves occurred. If he finds cause to believe, that the compositions which contain these statements betray, in numerous other instances, imperfect or erroneous information, he will just so far find cause to hesitate as to accepting these statements as safe foundation for an argument. It is one thing to regard a writer as of good authority when he describes the general state of a nation at a particular period, and indicates the institutions under which it then lived ; and quite another, to place implicit confidence in his accounts of single actions of individual men. Attributing a supernatural, or otherwise peculiar character to some person of whom he writes, an author may understand that character to involve the privilege of departure from the letter of the Law. But the reader, who does not see sufficient reason to adopt his opinion on the former point, will, at least, have equal scruples as to accepting his statements relative to the latter. Once more ; if the books of Samuel and Kings were the work of one hand, the author of the former believed the written Law to have existed before David's time ;* and, at all events, references to institutions of the Law, in the books of Samuel, show their writer to have believed that it was in force at the time so referred to. It follows, that he was able to reconcile with the fact of its existence any deviations from it which may have occurred ; and, if so, it is not for us, at this distant day, to pretend, that they were irreconcilable.

* 1 Kings ii. 3.

LECTURE XXXI.

THE REIGN OF SAUL.

1 SAMUEL XIII. 1.—XXXI. 13.

DEFECTS IN THE ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY PART OF SAUL'S REIGN.—
 ATTACK OF JONATHAN UPON GEBÄ, AND CONSEQUENT WAR WITH
 THE PHILISTINES.—SACRIFICE BY SAUL AT GILGAL, AND DIS-
 PLEASURE OF SAMUEL.—SUCCESSFUL ASSAULT OF JONATHAN AND
 HIS ARMOUR-BEARER UPON A PHILISTINE GARRISON.—DEFEAT OF
 THE PHILISTINE ARMY BY SAUL.—RESCUE OF JONATHAN FROM
 HIS DISPLEASURE THROUGH THE INTERFERENCE OF THE PEOPLE.
 —INDIGNATION OF SAMUEL AT HIS MANNER OF PROSECUTING THE
 WAR WITH THE AMALEKITES.—WARNING OF HIS FUTURE DE-
 POSITION FROM THE THRONE.—COMPARISON OF THIS ACCOUNT
 WITH A PRECEDING PASSAGE.—DAVID ANOINTED BY SAMUEL, AS
 FUTURE KING OF ISRAEL.—DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS OF THE IN-
 TRODUCTION OF DAVID TO SAUL.—COMBAT OF DAVID WITH GO-
 LIATH.—SAUL'S JEALOUSY OF DAVID.—FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND
 JONATHAN.—DAVID'S MILITARY SUCCESSSES.—HIS MARRIAGE WITH
 SAUL'S DAUGHTER.—ATTEMPTS OF SAUL UPON HIS LIFE.—HIS
 VISIT TO AHIMELECH, AND CONSEQUENT SLAUGHTER OF THE
 PRIESTS BY DOEG.—HIS VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINES, AND
 SAUL'S CONTINUED PERSECUTION OF HIM.—DEATH AND BURIAL OF
 SAMUEL.—CLENENCY OF DAVID TOWARDS NABAL.—PROTECTION
 EXTENDED TO DAVID BY THE KING OF GATH.—SAUL'S CONSULTA-
 TION WITH A WITCH.—VICTORY OF DAVID OVER THE AMALE-
 KITES.—DEFEAT, DEATH, AND BURIAL OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

THE words, which introduce the thirteenth chapter of the first book of Samuel, will not bear the rendering given to them by the authors of our version. If translated agreeably to the analogy of the same form of expression, as it occurs in numerous other places, they would read, either "Saul was *one* year old, when he began to reign" (which, considering the connexion, cannot

be supposed to have been the representation intended); or else, "Saul was —— years old," the writer having left a blank for the present, with the purpose of filling it up afterwards, when the number required should have been ascertained; a purpose which he never fulfilled.

Further; in what we have hitherto read of Saul, he is represented as "a choice young man." * When he next appears in the history, it is as the father of a warrior of sufficient age to be intrusted with a responsible command. The silence, in which the writer passes over the intervening period, is another indication of the deficiency of his materials. And even the length of the interval between the earlier and the later series of events, which he undertakes to record, it is probable, that he did not suppose himself to be acquainted with. It is true, that, according to the present Hebrew text, two years of Saul's reign had passed, when Jonathan, his son, commanded his troops at Gibeah; † but this is inconsistent with the previous statement of Saul's being but a youth when called to the throne, and it is necessary to allow, either that the text is corrupt, or that the statements are contradictory to a degree, which it is hard to imagine should have escaped the notice of the compiler. ‡

In the record, to which we have attended, of the ad-

* 1 Sam. ix. 2.

† xiii. 1, 2.

‡ The old versions use great freedom with this passage, apparently with a view to avoid the appearance of contradiction. The Alexandrine omits the first verse altogether, despairing, it would seem, of making any thing of it. The Chaldee reads; "Saul, when he began to reign, was like an innocent child of a year old, and he reigned two years" &c.; the Syriac, "When Saul had reigned one or two years"; and the Arabic, "When Saul had reigned one, two, or three years." The Vulgate acts the part of a faithful translator, without regard to consequences, and makes Saul, as king, take command of three thousand men, and conduct the other movements related in the context, when only three years old.

ministration of Samuel, it was stated, that "the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel; and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel; and the cities, which the Philistines had taken from Israel, were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath, and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines." * Either, however, the relative position of the two nations subsequently underwent material changes, of which we are not informed, or else the writer did not esteem it to be inconsistent with his design to incorporate into his book discordant representations upon this point. A Philistine garrison at Geba, a sacerdotal city within the limits of the tribe of Benjamin,† was stormed by Jonathan with his troops assembled at Gibeah; and this became the signal for a general war, which, boldly as the Israelites had provoked it, threw them at once into the greatest consternation. No sooner did they see the Philistine force, of which one part consisted of "thirty thousand chariots," poured upon their territory, than "the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits; and some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead;" while, as to those who resorted to Saul, "all the people followed him trembling." He waited for Samuel, to present with him a solemn offering, by which he hoped, at once, to propitiate the divine favor, and inspire his timid adherents. "But Samuel came not to Gilgal," when the time he had appointed had arrived; "the people were scattered from him"; and the impetuous Saul, impatient at the delay, proceeded to im-

* 1 Sam. vii. 13, 14.

† Comp. Josh. xxi. 17; 1 Kings xv. 22; Isaiah x. 29.

molate the victims in the prophet's absence. The solemnity was no sooner over, than Samuel arrived, and, indignant at Saul's misconduct, assured him, that, as a punishment of it, the Lord, who, if he had been obedient, would have established his house permanently upon the throne, had now determined to depose him, and had "sought him a man after his own heart, to be captain over his people." *

* 1 Sam. xiii. 1-14. — If the writer here meant to represent Saul as offering a sacrifice without the intervention of a priest, he also represents Samuel as rebuking him severely for his presumption; so that it would be impossible to appeal to the passage in proof of its having been held lawful in those times to sacrifice in a different way from what the Law, as we have it, prescribes. But I conceive, that this is not the import of the narrative. We find Gilgal to have been frequently the place of national resort and worship, and there it is likely that the tabernacle then was, with its attendant priests, ready to present the sole offering of Saul, or that which he should make jointly with Samuel. What the writer intended to represent, as cause of offence to the latter, I take to have been, that Saul should have pretended to proceed without his presence, when, as one intrusted with the messages of Jehovah, he had appointed to take a part in the proposed solemnity. Saul had "not kept the commandment of the Lord," because he had disregarded Samuel's own direction in x. 8. — "He tarried seven days, according to *the set time that Samuel had appointed*" &c. (8). One cannot undertake, with such imperfect means, to elaborate a theory concerning the composition of this book, showing how materials, drawn from different sources, were incorporated into one whole; but I cannot but think, that we have here another part of the same narrative, which, according to a suggestion made above (p. 258), was interrupted at x. 16. Towards the conclusion of that passage, Samuel is represented as appointing with Saul a meeting to sacrifice together, to be held at Gilgal; "Seven days," says he, "shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do" (x. 8). Of the keeping of this important assignation, we read nothing whatever in the context, but in place of it (at x. 17, where I have proposed to understand an independent narrative as beginning) we find the people collected by Samuel at Mizpeh. In the course of this latter account, they are indeed declared (xi. 14, 15) to have been called by him to Gilgal for a great religious coronation-festivity. {But, so far from any thing being there said of Saul's going to Gilgal to wait for Samuel a week, it appears to be implied, that they went together. It is not till we reach the account of Saul's Philistine war, that the appointment of the interview at Gilgal is again referred to, and then it is referred to in very precise terms. It

Samuel, leaving the king, is said to have gone to "Gibeah of Benjamin," the city of Saul's abode, whither Saul soon conducted "the people that were present with him, about six hundred men;" so small a force did he now retain of the three hundred and thirty thousand whom he had led against the Ammonites. The war proceeded under great disadvantages to the Israelites, their enemy having, as a measure of precaution, deprived them of all their artificers in iron; so, "that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan, but with Saul, and with Jonathan his son, was there found." *

Without his father's knowledge, and accompanied only by his armour-bearer, Jonathan set off to try his fortune against a Philistine garrison. "Behold," said he to his attendant, "we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them; if they say thus unto us, 'Tarry until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them; but if they say thus, 'Come up unto us,' then we will go up; for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand; and this shall be a sign unto us." They were received with what they had agreed to consider as a divine intimation to pursue their adventure. They fell upon the Philistine host, "and that first slaughter,

seems probable, that, early in Saul's reign, there had been imposing religious ceremonies at Gilgal, of which different accounts had been transmitted to later times, and that these are preserved by the writer, on the one hand, in 1 Sam. xi. 14 *et seq.*, and, on the other, in xiii. 8 *et seq.* (comp. x. 8). According to the latter account, the offence of Saul, which ultimately caused his deposition from the throne, took place on this occasion, while the former is silent respecting it; and, according to another passage, to come presently under our notice, that offence was committed at another time, and under somewhat similar, yet not the same circumstances.

* 1 Sam. xiii. 15-23.

which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within, as it were, an half acre of land ; and there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people ; the garrison and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked ; so it was a very great trembling ; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another." In short, a rout followed, like that of the Midianites, when Gideon had first reconnoitred their camp with his servant Phurah, and then assailed it with his three hundred soldiers.*

Saul and his party, watching the strange scene from a distance, and proceeding to inquire who was missing from their camp, discovered the absence of Jonathan and his attendant. The king summoned the young high priest, Abiah, great-grandson of Eli, — who, in this instance, it is expressly said, was at the camp in attendance upon the ark, — apparently with the intention of consulting him, whether it was the divine will that a general onset should be made. But, the confusion in the enemy's host continuing and increasing, Saul could restrain himself no longer. He led his troops to the assault, and, joined by other Israelites who came forth from their retreats, completed the triumph of the day. His followers, faint with their exertions, put to death the animals which fell into their hands, and, contrary to the precepts of the Law, ate them without first ridding them of the blood ; an offence, which, being reported to Saul, he reprov'd and forbade, and took means to prevent its repetition. In his earnestness to have no time lost in the pursuit, he had pronounced an imprecation upon any one who should refresh himself with food till evening. Jonathan, ignorant of this, had tasted

* 1 Sam xiv. 1 – 16 ; comp. Judges vii. 9 *et seq.*

a little wild honey, which, passing through a wood, he had collected on the end of his staff. When, at evening, Saul came to inquire of God through the priest, whether he should still continue the pursuit, he received no answer. Persuaded that this must have been owing to some sin of the people, he took means, like those which had been adopted by Joshua, in the case of Achan, to ascertain who was the transgressor. By the judgment of the lot, Jonathan was designated, who, owning what he had done, and being condemned by his father to die, was rescued by the people. The writer does not represent them to have incurred the divine displeasure in consequence; a fact which may be thought at variance with his intimations of the cause why no response had been made to Saul's application through the priest, and of a divine agency in the process by which Jonathan's act had been discovered. The chapter concludes with a brief statement respecting the various military operations in which Saul was engaged against the enemies of Israel on the different frontiers, and a mention of the names of the royal family.*

Saul had been charged by Samuel to make his conflict with the Amalekites a war of extermination, both for man and beast. With a force of two hundred and ten thousand men, he "came to a city of Amalek, and

* 1 Sam. xiv. 17–52. — "The *Hebrews* that were with the Philistines before that time," &c. (21); if, for *הַעֲבָדִים*, we read here *הַנֶּחֱבָדִים*, we obtain the better sense, which the Septuagint version expresses; viz. "the *slaves* that were with the Philistines," &c.; that is, the Hebrew captives, whom the Philistines had brought with them to the war, took the opportunity to desert to their countrymen. — "Saul built an altar unto the Lord" (35); this was very probably not an altar for sacrifice, but a monumental structure, like what Saul is afterwards (xv. 12) said to have erected to commemorate his victory over the Amalekites; comp. p. 264.

laid wait in the valley. And Saul smote the Amalekites, and he took Agag, the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword; but Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them." Upon this it is said, that there "came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, 'It repenteth me, that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.' And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night." He did not, however, hesitate to pronounce his message. He proceeded to Gilgal, whither the king had gone. Saul would have excused himself for sparing the herds and flocks of the Amalekites, by saying, that he reserved them for a great sacrifice to Jehovah; but the indignant prophet replied, that Jehovah loved obedience better than sacrifice, and that rejection "from being king over Israel" was to be the inevitable penalty of this disregard of the divine will. Samuel yielded to the king's intreaties, so far as to unite with him once more "before the elders of the people, and before Israel," in an act of worship; then, having put Agag to death with his own hand, he retired to his home at Ramah, and "came no more to see Saul until the day of his death." *

Here, I conceive, we have a second and different account, conveyed by tradition or record to the time of the compiler of this book, of the occasion of Saul's degradation from the regal dignity. The composition,

* 1 Sam. xv. 1-35. — Verses 2, 3, contain a reference to the record in Ex. xvii. 8-16. — "Saul said unto the Kenites," &c. (1 Sam. xv. 6); comp. Numb. xxiv. 21; Judges iv. 11.

which relates, that Samuel delivered to Saul a command, in language which recognises a divine choice of him as king, and implies no previous displeasure;* that, when that command was disobeyed, he was deeply grieved by the information, that Saul must be superseded in his office;† and that then he proceeded to inform the king of the penalty incurred by the present fault;‡—this composition can scarcely be referred to the same hand which had before recorded, that his dismissal was resolved upon because of another offence, and that his successor was already indicated. §

It is comparisons, like these, of the discordant contents of different passages, which, perhaps, convey the fullest satisfaction respecting the character of these books; showing, that they can neither have been composed under supernatural illumination, which cannot mislead, nor with full and accurate knowledge obtained in any way. If we point out what, in other writings, would be accounted mere trivialities of statement, it is possible to make the reply, that events are important, or otherwise, according to their relations, and that if we knew more of the relations of those in question, they might be revealed to us in a different light. When we refer to the record of events, which, if they took place, were miraculous, and say, that they are improbable, because miracles will not take place without sufficient reason, and for these no such reason appears, there remains room for the general remark, that, though no reason appears, it may, for aught we can surely know, have existed. When we appeal to instances, to which, from their nature, the supposition of miracle is inapplicable, and in which a course of action is described,

* 1 Sam. xv. 1.

† xv. 11.

‡ xv. 23, 26.

§ xiii. 13, 14.

irreconcilable with the laws of the human mind, we propose a very strong argument, and one not so easily evaded as the rest, against the credibility of the narrative which presents them. But when we discern inconsistent statements in the same history, the question respecting the supernatural information, and even respecting the competent knowledge of its author, would seem to be at an end. Of two inconsistent statements, both cannot be entirely true, though both may be false; and he who has written that which is not entirely true, cannot have been completely and precisely informed, either by inspiration or by human testimony. Whether an alleged inconsistency exists, may often present a question; but, whenever ascertained to exist, it settles the ulterior question respecting the absolute credibility of the writer.

Two other passages presently follow, to which, as I view them, the same remark is applicable as to the last two which were compared. They relate to the first acquaintance of Saul with David, that illustrious subject of Jewish history and song, who now first appears upon the stage.

In the first, we are told, that Samuel, in pursuance of a divine command, repaired to the house of one Jesse, at Bethlehem, in the district of Judah, and there, still under the same direction, by the customary form of anointing, consecrated his youngest son, David, to be the future monarch of Israel. David's introduction to the king soon followed. The naturally violent passions of Saul had been exasperated, by the cares of his responsible place, into occasional fits of insanity. It was recommended to him to try the effect of the soothing power of music; and, by one of those about him, "a son of Jesse" was mentioned, as "cunning in playing," as well as possessed of other accomplishments fitting

him to be an attendant upon the royal person. Saul sent for David, whose presence confirmed the favorable representations which had been made. The king "loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer;" and, with his father's approbation, remained a member of the royal household, exerting his minstrel skill to calm the agitations of his master's mind, as often as "an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." *

In the chapter which follows this account, David is introduced to the reader of the history under quite different circumstances. The Philistine war still raging, a champion of prodigious size, and wearing an enormous weight of armour, advances before the heathen host, and offers defiance to "the armies of the living God," proposing that the question of slavery and dominion, between the contending powers, shall be settled by the event of a single combat between himself and some valiant Israelite. The challenge, repeated every day, through forty days, throws the Israelitish host into desperate alarm. But relief comes from an unexpected quarter. At this time there lived, in Bethlehem of Judah, an Ephrathite, whose name was Jesse. He had eight sons, of whom three were with the army. David, the youngest, who remained at home, in charge

* 1 Sam. xvi. 1-23. — "Say, 'I am come to sacrifice to the Lord'" (2); I think it may be inferred, that, in the writer's opinion, even Samuel was not at liberty, at least on ordinary occasions, to sacrifice in any place indifferently. Otherwise, his having a sacrifice in view would have been no explanation to Saul of his visit to Jesse; it would have excited, much more than quieted suspicion. But if the ark was now at Bethlehem, or at some place in its neighbourhood (for instance, at Mizpeh, where we often find it), Saul would not be surprised to learn, that Samuel, having a sacrifice in view, had taken a journey from Ramah for the purpose. — "David came to Saul; and he became his armour-bearer" (21); in modern language this would be expressed by saying, he was appointed the king's *aid-de-camp*; he became a member of his military family.

of his father's flock, was sent by him to visit his brothers at the camp, and carry them a supply of necessities. Witness to the impious challenge of the Philistine giant, and learning that the king had promised great wealth, and his own daughter's hand, to the Israelitish soldier, who should deliver his people in this fearful emergency, he offers himself to the unequal strife, notwithstanding the contemptuous remonstrance of his brethren, who had known him only as a shepherd boy, and, what is still more strange, with the implied consent of the people to accept the conditions offered by Goliath, and stake their freedom on the success of one so young and feeble. The king, informed of the purpose of the stranger youth, summons him to his own presence, and, perceiving his confidence, that "the Lord that delivered" him "out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear," slain by him while keeping the flock of Jesse, would also deliver him "out of the hand of this Philistine," consents, that he shall undertake the desperate service. David declines the use of the king's armour, as of a kind of defence to which he had not been used, and proceeds on his enterprise, carrying only a staff, a sling, and five smooth stones in his shepherd's bag.*

* 1 Sam. xvii. 1-40. — "Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span" (4); that is, eleven feet, at the current computation of a foot and four fifths to the cubit. — "David went, and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep" (15); not that the king's armour-bearer had, in time of war, gone back to his father to take care of a flock, but the youth, who, in this narrative, is unknown in that character, was in the habit of going to and from Saul's camp in the service of his father and brothers. He "went from Saul" in the same sense in which his brethren, repairing to the camp, are said (14) to have "followed Saul." — "The man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter" (25); we read of no fulfilment of this promise in the sequel; David afterwards became Saul's son-in-law, but it was on a different condition from that of killing Goliath;

The combatants approach each other, and the Philistine accosts David with contemptuous language, to which he replies with the expression of his reliance on the protection of his father's God. A stone from his sling stuns and prostrates his adversary; and David, drawing Goliath's own sword, puts him to death, bears away his head to Jerusalem as a trophy of the exploit, and deposits Goliath's armour in his own tent. The Israelites rush upon the Philistines, and complete the victory; and Saul, having made inquiry respecting David, of Abner, who professed himself as ignorant as his master, summoned David to his presence, and, being informed of his parentage, retained him as a member of his own household. "Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house." *

I have said, that here are two independent and inconsistent accounts of the first acquaintance of Saul with David. It is impossible, without disregarding the circumstances of the case out of favor to a preconceived hypothesis, to view them in any other light. Through the whole of the second narrative, we look in vain for any thing which appears like a continuation of what is contained in the first. And, on the other hand, to suppose, either that, as compositions, they were originally successive parts of one whole, or that, in fact, the events took place as, according to the present arrangement, they are described, is to suppose, that the shep-

comp. xviii. 22-27. — "Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, 'Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down, that thou mightest see the battle.' And David said, 'What have I now done? Is there not a cause?'" (28, 29). The king's armour-bearer would not have been addressed with such a taunt by any man in his senses, nor would he have made such a reply.

* 1 Sam. xvii. 41 — xviii. 2.

herd boy, whose pretension to undertake a soldier's proper duty excited only ridicule and indignation, was the same who is either represented as having been, or who actually had been, known before as an officer of high rank about the king; * that Saul is represented as being, or that he actually was, unacquainted with an individual † who had previously filled a responsible place near his person, ‡ who had been the companion of his private hours; § and with whose family he had held communication respecting the continuance of his service; and that (if it be said that something must be allowed for the disordered state of Saul's mind) Abner, his general, labored under an equal ignorance of one, with whom he must previously have held intimate official relations. || A critic cannot, without great unfaithfulness to his office, pass over circumstances, so strongly indicative as these of the character of a writing. ¶

A warm friendship grew up between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul; while, on the other hand, David became an object of jealousy and hatred to the king, by reason of the applause and popularity which followed his recent exploit. So far did this feeling proceed, that Saul, in an access, real or feigned, of the mental malady to which he was subject, twice attempted, but unsuccessfully, the life of his young attendant. At length David was removed from his place about the royal person, and sent into the field against the Philistines as "captain over a thousand"; and, to excite him the more to some hazardous enterprise, in which he

* 1 Sam. xvi. 22; comp. 18.

† xvii. 55-58.

‡ xvi. 21.

§ xvi. 23.

|| xvii. 55.

¶ The passages, xvii. 12-31, 54 — xviii. 5, are missing from the Vatican manuscript of the Septuagint version. But this proves nothing, except that the copyist observed the contradictions which they presented to the context, and therefore forebore to record them.

might fall a victim to his patriotism and courage, Saul promised him his eldest daughter in marriage, if he would "be valiant," and "fight the Lord's battles." The promise was broken; but, being renewed in respect to the king's second daughter, with a specification of the desperate service by which such a high alliance was to be won, David fulfilled twofold the conditions of the offer, and "Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife." *

The brave and wise conduct of David, and the elevation which he had attained, both as the favorite of the people, and as a member of the royal family, embittered yet more against him the irritable spirit of Saul, and led to further practices against his life. By the good offices of Jonathan, a temporary reconciliation was effected; but again, under the same circumstances as before, the king assailed him with a deadly weapon, and afterwards beset his house with assassins, from whom he escaped by a stratagem of Michal. In this exigency of his fortunes, David had recourse to Samuel at Ramah, who with him "went and dwelt in Naioth." Thither "Saul sent messengers to take David," who, on approaching Samuel and his company, were seized with a sudden impulse, like what is said to have possessed the king himself on a previous occasion, "and they also prophesied." A second and third party, having been despatched on the same errand, were affected in the same extraordinary manner.

* 1 Sam. xviii. 3-27. — "He *prophesied* in the midst of the house" (10); rather (agreeably to the Hithpael form of the verb) "he played the prophet," *quasi* "he ranted," "he raved." — Verses 13-16 seem but a more compendious form of the statement in 5-9, suggesting the probability, that originally they did not belong together. — "Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law in *the one of the twain*" (21); there is nothing in the original corresponding with the words in italics; our translators make a text, to avoid what seemed to be a difficulty (comp. 19).

At length Saul went in person to the place, and became a subject of the same influence. "He stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day, and all that night; wherefore they say; 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'" It is impossible, I think, not to recognise in this passage another *edition* (so to speak) of the account before given, in connexion with that of Saul's first visit to Samuel, of the origin of a proverbial expression, applied to such as were observed to be in ungenial company.*

Under circumstances so threatening, David withdrew from Naioth, and betook himself to his friend Jonathan for sympathy and counsel. If we should regard these statements as making parts of a continuous narrative, it would be necessary to understand, that he felt himself under obligation, notwithstanding all that had passed, to present himself for the ceremonious duty of attendance upon the king at the approaching feast of the new moon, or to be provided with some sufficient excuse for absence. Jonathan, stipulating, that, in requital of his kindness, David, when exalted to the greatness which awaits him, shall "show kindness" to himself and his "house for ever," engages to offer his apology, and to acquaint him with the manner of its reception, and with the observations made by him respecting the present feelings and purposes of Saul; and to this end it is agreed between the friends, that, according as David, from a place of concealment, shall hear Jonathan give one or another direction to his servant, he shall

* 1 Sam. xviii. 28 — xix. 24. comp. x. 10 — 13. — "He prophesied before Samuel" (xix. 24). But in xv. 35, we read (according to the original, which our translators have misrepresented, to disguise the contradiction), "Samuel did not see Saul again till the day of his death."

understand, that the danger is over, or that he must seek safety in flight. On the first day of the feast, Saul observes David's vacant seat in silence. On the second, he makes inquiry of Jonathan, and is so incensed by his reply as to assail him with a deadly weapon. Jonathan, accordingly, proceeds to give to David the sign agreed upon, and contrives opportunity for an interview, at which, in parting, they renew their protestations of constant friendship.*

By this time it would seem, that the tabernacle had been conveyed to a city of the tribe of Benjamin,† called *Nob*. To this place David repairs, and, pretending, that he has been despatched on an important secret service by the king, applies to the high priest for food and arms. Ahimelech produces the heavy sword of Goliath from its place of deposit within the sacred precincts; and for food, being provided with no other, allows him to take some stale loaves of shew-bread, which had been removed from the Holy Place. In this extremity of his fortunes, David withdrew first to the court of Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, where he feigned idiocy; next, to a retirement within the bounds of his own tribe, where he gathered followers of "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented," to the number of "about four hundred men"; next, to the country of the Moabites, from whose king he solicited protection for his parents; and, lastly, — under the direction of the prophet Gad, who now first appears in

* 1 Sam. xx. 1 – 42. — The arrangements of Jonathan for an interview with David, for the purpose of giving him information respecting Saul's designs, have a resemblance to each other, as represented in xix. 2, 3, and in xx. 18 – 23, though in the former case the statement seems to have been left incomplete.

† See Nehemiah xi. 31, 32.

the history, — to a forest solitude within the territory of Judah.*

Saul, hearing of David's movements, gave vent to his harsh and suspicious temper, in charges against his son, of abetting the rebellious designs of the son of Jesse, and in appeals to his Benjamite followers, whether, if a descendant from Judah should supplant him on the throne, they could hope, at his hand, for wealth and dignities like what they now enjoyed. In this exasperated state of his feelings, an Idumean, named Doeg, came and informed him of the recent transaction, to which he had been witness, between David and Ahimelech. The insane rage of the king no longer knew any bounds. He commanded an indiscriminate slaughter of the priests of Nob. "But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord; and the king said to Doeg, 'Turn thou and fall upon the priests.' And Doeg, the Edomite, turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew, on that day, fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword. And one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David." He was spared to act an important part in the later history.†

* 1 Sam. xxi. 1 — xxii. 5. — "The cave Adullam" (xxii. 1). In Josh. xv. 35, Adullam is the name of a place within the bounds of Judah. — "David said unto the king of Moab, 'Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth and be with you'" (1 Sam. xxii. 3); David, perhaps, sought a place of refuge for his parents among the Moabites, on account of the descent of his family from that race, through Ruth.

† xxii. 6–23. — "Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub" (9; comp. xxi. 1). Was Ahimelech another name, as the commentators say, of Abiah, men-

Intelligence being brought to David of a marauding excursion of the Philistines, he is related to have "inquired of the Lord," whether he shall advance with his small party to repel them, and to have received an affirmative reply; which was repeated, when the inquiry was made a second time, in consequence of the disinclination of his followers. The event corresponded with the encouragement which had been given. "David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and smote them with a great slaughter;" and at this place it was, according to the present account, that he was joined by the priest Abiathar. Hither, also, Saul resolved to pursue him, and, David having applied, through Abiathar, for divine instruction respecting the degree of danger to which he was exposed, and being informed, that the men of Keilah were prepared to betray him to the king, he "and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph." *

Here he had another stolen interview with Jonathan, in which they renewed their vows of friendship; and hither, by information derived from the neighbouring

tioned in xiv. 3? or had Ahimelech succeeded to the priesthood, after his brother Abiah's death? or did different records assign the high priest's office at the same time, one to one person, the other to another?

* 1 Sam. xxiii. 1—14. — "David inquired of the Lord" (2, 4); this was before the high priest had joined him; the writer's idea probably was, that he prayed to have divine direction communicated to him in a dream; comp. xxviii. 6. — "Abiathar fled to David to *Keilah*" (6); comp. xxii. 5, 20, 21. — "David said to Abiathar the priest, 'Bring hither the ephod'" (9); comp. 6. It seems that the writer, who understood that David might, on an emergency, apply directly for an intimation of the divine mind, conceived that he would prefer to do so, when circumstances permitted, through the high priest, clothed in his pontifical attire; comp. Ex. xxviii. 28—30; Vol. I. pp. 211, 212.

inhabitants, he was traced by Saul, who continued the pursuit till he was withdrawn from it by the alarm of a Philistine invasion.* Returning after a short time, and learning the place of David's present retreat, the king came up with him at the head of three thousand men. He chanced to enter alone a cave, in which David and his party (large as it was) had concealed themselves; and David, resisting the advice of his friends to use his advantage in ridding himself at once of his implacable enemy, contented himself with secretly approaching the king and cutting off a piece of his robe; which he had no sooner done, than he was visited with self-reproach for offering even such an indignity as this to his "master, the Lord's anointed." When Saul had issued from the cavern, David followed and called after him, and, approaching him with all demonstrations of reverence, remonstrated with him on the unreasonableness and cruelty of his hostile proceedings. "My father, see," said the unoffending fugitive; "yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see, that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee." Saul could not be unmoved by the magnanimity of his injured servant. He "lifted up his voice, and wept; and he said to David, 'Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.'" "I know full well," he added, "that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine

* 1 Sam. xxiii. 15-29. — "They two made a covenant before the Lord" (18); comp. xx. 16, 42.

hand. Swear now, therefore, unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house." David having given him this assurance, they parted in seeming friendship; "and Saul went home, but David and his men gat them up unto the hold." *

At this juncture, we are told, that "Samuel died, and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah." David, in this low condition of his fortunes, applied for supplies for himself and his followers to one Nabal, an opulent proprietor in the southern region of Palestine. His messengers having received a churlish denial, he set off, at the head of four hundred men, to enforce the demand; but, on the way, he was met by Abigail, Nabal's wife, who, apprehensive for the consequences of what had occurred, had, unknown to her husband, come to propitiate David with a liberal present. She obtained his promise to desist from his hostile design, and, returning home, informed Nabal of the peril from which, through her means, he had been rescued. The intelligence so disturbed him, that "his heart died within him," and he survived but a few days. "And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife." The whole narrative, indeed, otherwise without special interest, probably owed its importance, in the compiler's view, to its connexion with one of the marriages of David, who, we are also here told, was wedded to Ahinoam the

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 1–22. — "The men of David said unto him, 'Behold, the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand'" &c. (4); the reference here is to something not contained in any part of the preceding narrative.

Jezreelitess; his first wife, Michal, having been withdrawn from him by her father.*

In the twenty-sixth chapter, we read of another instance of Saul's owing his life to the magnanimity of David. The king, informed of the place of David's retreat by the people of Ziph, went in pursuit of him with a party of three thousand men. David had observed his movements, and one night, as the king, having neglected to set a sufficient watch, lay asleep, surrounded by his troops, David came upon him, accompanied by Abishai, his nephew, and "took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster." He then "went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off," and calling to Abner, the king's general, taunted him with his negligence in providing for his master's safety. "David said unto Abner, 'Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like unto thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.'" David then proceeded, as before, to expostulate with Saul concerning his unprovoked hostility; the king expressed his contrition, his purpose of desisting for the future from such attempts, and his persuasion of the high destiny which awaited David; and, parting, "David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place."†

* 1 Sam. xxv. 1-44. — "There was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel," &c. (2); Maon and Carmel (not Mount Carmel) were both within the district of Judah; comp. Josh. xv. 55; 1 Sam. xxiii. 24. — "Nabal is his name, and folly is with him" (25); a *paronomasia* on the name Nabal, נָבָל, which signifies a fool.

† xxvi. 1-25. — "Abishai, the son of Zeruiah" (6); Zeruiah was David's sister; comp. 1 Chron. ii. 16.

In reference to the narrative in the twenty-fourth chapter, I have called this "*another* instance of Saul's owing his life to the magnanimity of David." But a comparison of the two accounts disposes the reader strongly to the conclusion, that the same incident, differently embellished as it passed through different channels of tradition into the writer's hands, was the basis of them both. Both are introduced in the same manner, with the intelligence brought by the Ziphites to Saul, at Gibeah, concerning the movements of David, which are described, in both cases, in the same terms. "Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, 'Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?'"* In both instances, Saul was accompanied by "three thousand chosen men out of all Israel."† In both instances, David, coming upon Saul by stealth, resists solicitations to take his life; ‡ in both he carries away evidence of the danger to which the king had been exposed, and the forbearance which he had himself used; § in both he is represented as profiting by the occasion to expostulate with Saul to the same effect, and partly in the same very peculiar words; || in both Saul is represented as condemning his own past conduct, and expressing his confidence of David's future elevation; ¶ and the language, in which they are related to have separated after the interview, is in the two passages substantially the same.** In the second there is no reference to the first, either on the writer's part, or in the dialogue be-

* 1 Sam. xxiii. 19; comp. xxvi. 1.

† xxiv. 2; comp. xxvi. 2.

‡ xxiv. 3-7; comp. xxvi. 7-11.

§ xxiv. 4; comp. xxvi. 12.

|| xxiv. 8-15; comp. xxvi. 17-20, 23; especially comp. xxiv. 14, with xxvi. 20.

¶ xxiv. 16-21; comp. xxvi. 21, 25.

** xxiv. 22; comp. xxvi. 25.

tween the persons concerned, as it is reasonable to suppose, that there would have been, if there had been a second incident, so closely resembling another of earlier date. And the chief difference between them consists in the very subordinate circumstance of the evidence, carried away by David, to show to Saul what he had done and forborne; this being, in the one case, a piece severed from the king's dress, and, in the other, the spear and cruse which stood by his side as he slept.

Achish is said to have been king of Gath, which was not only one of the five great Philistine cities,* but the very city of that Philistine champion whom David had slain.† Yet between Achish and David relations of special intimacy are described as having subsisted. On a former occasion of danger, David had found protection at his court,‡ and now is said to have received from him the present of a city, where, for "a full year and four months," he, with his party of six hundred, sought a refuge in the danger which they apprehended from the continued persecution of Saul. His active spirit, however, finding no satisfaction in the tame and inglorious employments of peace, "David and his men went up and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites; and David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive; and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned." To Achish he pretended, that he had been engaged in an inroad upon his countrymen of Judea, and, to avoid being detected in this deception, "David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring tidings to Gath, saying, 'lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David.'" This rupture of former ties was understood by the king as securing to

* 1 Sam. vi. 17.

† xvii. 23.

‡ xxi. 10.

himself, irrevocably, the services of his warlike confederate. "Achish believed David, saying, 'He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever'"; and, when another war with Israel seemed approaching, "Achish said unto David, 'Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.'"*

The Philistines mustered a numerous force, and passed within the Israelitish border. Saul sought direction from Jehovah in vain; "the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets;" and, unmanned by his fears, he adopted the desperate measure of seeking counsel in a way disallowed by a precept of the law, which he had himself been studious to enforce. "Saul said unto his servants, 'Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.'" A person, pretending to this character, was pointed out to him, as dwelling at a place called En-dor, and to her abode the king accordingly repaired, with only two attendants, by night, and in disguise. "Bring me him up," said he to the woman, "whom I shall name unto thee." She, having represented to him the danger which would be incurred by such a proceeding, in consequence of the severity with which all engaged in such had of late been treated by the king, he gave her a solemn assurance of impunity, and then said, that it was Samuel whom he desired that she should raise. She forthwith pretended to behold the form of the departed prophet, and, when the king, who is not related to have seen any thing, asked for a description of her vision, "An old man," said she, "cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle." As Saul, in an agony of terror,

* 1 Sam. xxvii. 1 — xxviii. 2.

“stooped with his face to the ground and bowed himself,” — his posture, as well as the agitated state of his mind, favoring the deception which was practised on him, — the woman, in the use of that art of ventriloquism, which was one of the common resources of such impostors, announced to him, speaking in the prophet’s character, his approaching defeat and death. “Wherefore dost thou ask of me,” said Samuel, that is, the woman speaking in his name, “seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me; the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.” After this terrible annunciation, Saul inquired no more. Faint with fasting, and unnerved by mental distress, he was hardly prevailed upon by his attendants to refresh himself with food, and then set out to return to his camp before the dawn.*

* 1 Sam. xxviii. 3-25. — “Now Samuel was dead” &c. (3); this, in the original, appears to be only a second statement of the death and burial of Samuel, before related in xxv. 1, though our translators, giving a different turn to the sentence by the use of the pluperfect tense, have kept this fact out of view. — “Saul had put away those *that had familiar spirits*” (ibid.); the word *בַּיָּדָא*, thus translated, is, in the Septuagint version, rendered *βγγοργισμους*, *ventriloquist*; see Lev. xix. 31; xx. 27; 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 6; Is. viii. 19; and comp. Is. xxix. 4. Josephus, too, in his account of this scene (“Antiq.” lib. vi. cap. 14), calls the woman an *βγγοργισμους*. — “The king said unto her, ‘Be not afraid, for what sawest thou?’” (1 Sam. xxviii. 13); this distinctly implies, that Saul had not himself seen any thing. — “And the woman said unto Saul, ‘I saw *gods ascending out of the earth*’” (ibid.); rather, *a godlike form*. — Saul continued to question her, “and she said, ‘An old man cometh up, and he is covered *with a mantle*’” (14); here was a felicitous stroke of her art; when Saul last saw the prophet (xv. 35), they had parted in anger, “and as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent” (xv. 27). The occurrence was one likely to become generally known, and the sorceress, availing herself of it, brought up, to torture the king, a scene which always haunted his memory. — “Saul perceived [or *knew*, *יָדָע*], that it was Samuel” (14); he knew it not by

In this account of the transaction, I have represented it as I believe it to have been understood by the writer. It is his own sense, and not something which would have been his sense, had he been more accurately informed, that I have endeavoured to express. Entertaining the views, already expounded at large, concerning the authority with which he writes, I need not say, that, were it plain, that he believed that the first king of Israel had held converse with a disembodied spirit, I could not regard this as good proof of the reality of that extraordinary fact. But, on the other hand, I cannot admit, without strong evidence, that, at any period of the Jewish state, any Jew, as enlightened as this writer appears to have been, could have believed, that the pretended art of raising the dead was a real art, — that a necromancer was any thing but an impostor; nor does the account itself, rightly interpreted, afford the slightest reason to believe, that he regarded the woman of En-dor in any other light.

In the following more detailed statement, I represent some further particulars of the transaction, both as I believe the writer to have understood them, and as they are in fact very likely to have occurred. Saul, — a man of intensely strong passions, and accordingly capable of the most vigorous action, when he was their master, but liable to be mastered by them, and then to sink into self-abandonment, and be driven to all sorts of extravagances, — of a stubborn pride, which, when forced to yield, is apt to give place to loss of all self-respect, to base expedients, and abject terrors, —

the evidence of his own senses, but from the reply which had just been made to his question, "What form is he of?" — "And he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself" (*ibid.*); rather, I think, in his helpless agitation, *he had stooped*, so that his posture prevented a detection of the fraud.

of an excitable nervous temperament, which had repeatedly been exasperated before into fits of insanity, — was driven, by the long-continued pressure of public duties, and by the present disastrous posture of his affairs,* to the verge of distraction; and in this state of mind, was led to entertain the thought of consulting, in her mean hiding-place, one of the wretched outcasts, of whose presence, with a wholesome severity, he had busied himself to purge the land. The very adoption of a resolution so distasteful to his feelings, so hostile to his sense of honor and duty, was enough to dispossess him of whatever degree of sanity or calmness of mind was left; and when it is added, that the time was night, when the senses are easiest deluded, and a superstitious imagination most excitable, and that he presented himself before the woman in a state of physical debility, — that “there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night,”† — no more is necessary to show, that he was in all respects prepared to be the subject of a tolerably ingenious imposture.

Such imposture, I need not argue that the woman of En-dor, from the very nature of her craft, was prepared to practise. But she needed the knowledge of some facts to work with. In the present instance, she needed to know, who it was that had come to consult her. How was that knowledge obtained? It is unnecessary to say, that, with the usual adroitness of such practitioners, she may have extracted it from his attendants, or, that she may have made her inferences from those involuntary tokens of respect, which, from the habit of rendering them, they were now unable wholly to sup-

* “When Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.” 1 Sam. xxviii. 5.

† xxviii. 20.

press. The individual before her was the king, with whose person, moving on public occasions in the midst of crowds, most inhabitants of the country were likely to be acquainted, and whom, as the implacable foe of her own vagabond fraternity, she would, at some time, have been impelled, by a natural curiosity, to see. Further; there was a peculiarity of the royal person, which could not but be notorious, and which was incapable of being disguised. Saul "was higher than any of the people, from his shoulders and upward."* Again; in the disorder of his spirits, he betrayed himself, by the tenor of his inadvertent language; when the woman expressed her apprehension of the king's vengeance, should she be informed against as having listened to such a suit, and thereupon "Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, 'As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing,'"† Who can it be, she would unavoidably argue with herself, from whom such a peremptory assurance of impunity can come, except the king himself? And any doubt, still remaining, must have been dispelled, when she was told, as she was before she committed herself by calling Saul by name, that it was the form of Samuel which she was desired to evoke, — of Samuel, whom the perplexed monarch, rather than any other Israelite, must have been supposed to wish to consult.

These considerations explain how it would be altogether gratuitous to resort to the supposition of any supernatural knowledge having been attributed by the writer, to the woman of En-dor, in order to account for his representation of her acquaintance with the fact, that it was Saul with whom she was conferring. But he also represents her as announcing to Saul, that the

* 1 Sam. x. 23.

† xxviii. 10.

Philistines should prevail, and that he and his sons should fall in the approaching battle.* How did the writer understand her, without supernatural knowledge, to have been able to predict these events, which actually followed? I reply, that the probability of the main fact, that the Philistines would obtain the victory, could not but be obvious to a person of her sagacity. It was known to her, as it was notorious to the whole nation, that that warlike people had invaded the borders of Israel, with a force sufficient to spread a universal alarm, and the individual, on the calm and energetic action of whose mind the only hope of safety rested, now stood unnerved and half-maddened before her. But even had the result turned out to be different from what all probabilities indicated, she had nothing to lose by the detected error in her prediction; for she could scarcely have apprehended, that the king, in the exultation of any victory he should win, and the new engagements consequent upon it, would care to call her to account for her false forebodings; or, if otherwise, it is not to be supposed, that she intended, now that he had discovered her retreat, to remain within his reach. Further; had the probability of the calamity, which she foretold, been far less than it was, it is to be presumed, that still she would have foretold it, in the indulgence of the vindictive feelings which she must needs have entertained towards Saul, for the severities he had exercised towards the professors of her art. It would be the natural impulse of her mind, under the circumstances, to depress and disable him still more, by her prophecies of disaster, and so help to bring about the calamities which she denounced. As to her prediction of the fall of Saul and his sons in the approaching battle, what was

* 1 Sam. xxviii. 19.

universally known concerning the monarch's character, gave her some authority for believing, that, especially in his present excited state of mind, he would not survive the mortification of a defeat. But it would be altogether unsafe to assume, that this part of the prediction was ever uttered; it is precisely one of those embellishments which, after the death of Saul and his sons was known to have occurred, would, in the course of transmission to later times, be likely to be added to the original narrative.*

This passage has not the bearing which, at first view, might be thought, upon the important question of a belief, among the Jews, in the doctrine of a future life; — a doctrine of which there have appeared no traces in those parts of the Old Testament, which have as yet come under our notice. The Law had spoken of pretenders to the art of necromancy, but it had spoken of them in connexion with other idolatrous impostors; nor can its language be any more understood to contain an intimation of the fact of the continued existence of the dead, than of a power in living men to consult them. The craft is referred to, like that of an "observer of times," as one of the "abominations of the nations," and is prohibited, along with the idolatrous service of "one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire."† The fact of the existence, at any time, in Judea, of a class of persons, whose employment was to work upon the superstition of the vulgar, and who, of course, were not attached to the national religion, which forbade their practices, proves nothing whatever concerning any reputable currency in that

* Besides, not all of Saul's sons did fall; comp. 1 Sam. xxxi. 2, with 2 Sam. ii. 8.

† Deut. xviii. 9–14.

country, of any opinion, true or false, on which such practices were founded; and all that can be inferred on the subject, from the present narrative, is, that one individual, — the king, — who was constitutionally subject to a mental malady, and whom circumstances had conspired to drive to a sort of frenzy, had, for the time, yielded to the idea, that what he had been long endeavouring to repress, as a flagitious imposture, was in truth a real practice, and that the dead, still surviving in another state, might be evoked and conversed with through idolatrous incantations.

The history returns to David, who, embarrassed by his recent relations to the king of Gath, had found it necessary to attend that prince in his invasion of Judea. He was relieved from this perplexity by the suspicions of the Philistine lords, who expressed to their master their doubts of his fidelity; and, Achish assuring him that no such doubts rested on his own mind, but that, in order to quiet the uneasiness of his followers, it was best that they should part, David, dissembling his satisfaction, gladly withdrew from a situation in which the obligations of patriotism interfered with those of private gratitude and friendship, and returned with his party of six hundred men into Philistia.* On arriving at Ziklag, their home, he found that a roving band of Amalekites had attacked and burned it during his absence, and

* 1 Sam. xxix. 1 – 11. — “Achish called David, and said unto him, ‘Surely as the Lord [Jehovah] liveth,’” &c. (6); to the natural question, what propriety there is in putting such language into the mouth of an idolatrous prince, Le Clerc, after Cappel (“Vet. Test.” *ad loc.*), well replies, that the case is the same as if a writer, composing a drama in Latin, on the history, for instance, of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, should put into the mouths of those patriarchs such oaths as *Mecastor*, *Edepol*, *Mehercle*. They are forms of adjuration, proper to the language used by the writer, and corresponding, in import and solemnity, to those which, in their own language, the characters introduced would have employed.

had carried off the women and children captives. Thereat "David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him; because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Having asked divine direction through Abiathar, and received a favorable answer, he forthwith proceeded in pursuit of the marauders. While "two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor," he pushed on with the rest, and was so fortunate as to come up with an Egyptian slave of the Amalekites, who, falling sick, had been left behind by them on their retreat. Taking him for a guide, he soon overtook the spoilers, whom he found off their guard, "spread abroad upon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day; and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away." His followers would have refused all share in the spoil to their two hundred companions, who had been left behind. But David opposed himself to such an injustice; "As his part is," said he, "that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff; they shall part alike." And to this incident the writer traces one particular of the usages of war, observed in his own time. "It was so from that day forward," he says, "that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."* Returning

* 1 Sam. xxx. 1 - 25. — Perhaps, in this account of the temporary separation of two hundred of David's party from the rest, we are to recog-

from this fortunate expedition, David employed part of the fruits of his victory in reviving, among his former associates, an interest in his fortunes. "He sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt." *

The crisis of Saul's fate had come. "The Philistines fought against Israel, and the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him." He called to his armour-bearer to put him to death, and so save him from falling into the hands of the uncircumcised foe. "But his armour-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid; therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it;" and "Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day, together." The Philistines, finding his body on the field of battle, "cut off his head, and stripped off his armour; and they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth, and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan." The inhabitants of Jabesh in Gilead, in whose behalf his first act of heroism and of regal authority had been done, showed their gratitude by their care of his lifeless remains. "The valiant men" of that place "arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the

nise another form of the same incident related in connexion with the expedition of David against Nabal; with 1 Sam. xxx. 10, 24, comp. xxv. 13. The rule established by David on this occasion is no violation of that of Moses, recorded in Numb. xxxi. 25-30 (comp. Vol. I. p. 410). The cases were not the same. The difference in the distribution of *prize-money*, contemplated by Moses, was between the citizens who engaged in the labors and dangers of a campaign, and those who stayed at home. David's rule was, that there should be no difference between those who took part in an engagement, and those who, while engaged in the war, were, from any accidental cause, absent from the field.

* 1 Sam. xxx. 26-31.

bodies of his sons, from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burned them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.”*

* 1 Sam. xxxi. 1–13. — “The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul” (11); comp. xi. 1 *et seq.*

LECTURE XXXII.

STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER OF THE
HEBREW POETRY.

HEBREW NAMES OF A POEM. — BOOKS CONSIDERED POETICAL BY THE MODERN JEWS. — CHARACTERISTICS OF POETICAL COMPOSITION IN GENERAL, AS TO SPIRIT AND FORM. — DIFFICULTY OF THE INVESTIGATION RESPECTING THE FORM OF HEBREW POETRY, ARISING FROM OUR IGNORANCE OF THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE LANGUAGE. — AID DERIVED FROM A NUMBER OF ACROSTIC POEMS. — HEBREW POETRY NOT RHYMED, — NOR TAKING ITS FORM FROM THE QUANTITY OF SYLLABLES. — ERRONEOUS THEORY OF BISHOP HARE. — TRUE THEORY OF BISHOP LOWTH. — DESCRIPTION AND EXAMPLES OF THE SYNONYMOUS, — THE ANTITHETIC, — AND THE SYNTHETIC PARALLELISM. — BOLD AND FERVID GENIUS OF HEBREW POETRY. — POETICAL IDIOMS. — USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE. — EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE BOLDER FIGURES. — POETICAL TOPICS, OR COMMON-PLACES, SUPPLIED BY NATURAL OBJECTS, — AND BY THE NATIONAL CUSTOMS, OPINIONS, RELIGION, HISTORY, AND LAWS. — EXAMPLES OF ILLUSTRATION FROM SUCH SOURCES. — FRUITLESSNESS OF THE ATTEMPT TO REDUCE THE HEBREW POEMS TO THE DIVISIONS OF CLASSICAL AND MODERN RHETORIC.

HAVING submitted what I believe to be the true principles of interpretation of the books comprehended in the collection called the Early Prophets, and illustrated them by a minute criticism of the contents of one half of those books, I propose now to pass to some remarks on a portion of the Later Prophets, to which class are referred Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve, commonly known by the name of the Minor Prophets. It is necessary, however, first to give attention to some subjects relating to the form and interpretation of those writings. One of these subjects is, the Structure and Character of the Hebrew Poetry.

With apparent reference to its material, as an *imaginative* composition, a poem is called in Hebrew, מִשָּׁל, *Mashal*.* With reference to its form, as *divided* into stanzas or lines, it is called מִסְמֹר, *Mismor*.† The modern Jews, after the Masorites, reckon but three poetical books of the Old Testament, called by them אֶמֶת, *Ameth*, ‡ that word being formed by the initial letters of the titles of those books. They are Job, the Proverbs, and the Psalms. These alone are pointed with the poetical accents. We shall see, that such a distinction of them from others is altogether arbitrary and unfounded. By far the greater part of what, in the arrangement of our English Bibles, follows the book of Esther to the close of the Old Testament collection, has an equal claim to be considered poetry.

But on what ground shall we give the name poetry to the books just now specified, or to any other writings of the ancient Jews? This question evidently invites us to fix on some definition of poetry, for a standard, by which to try their several titles to that character.

There is scarcely any thing else so important, belonging to their department, which the rhetoricians have left so little fixed as the meaning of this word. It is in vain to look for a definition of poetry in any forms of language in which thought is clothed. Certainly rhyme is not essential to it. Rhyme is a modern invention of barbarous tribes, bearing, some would say, the clear signature of its barbarous origin; and it is not of universal use, even in our modern and western poems. Nor is rhythm essential to poetry, or the recurrence, at prescribed intervals, of the same quality and proportion of syllables; though to say this is to contradict a

* From מִשָּׁל, *he likened*.

† From מָצַל, *he cut, or separated*.

‡ The word signifies *truth*.

canon of Longinus.* Poetical thoughts are not solely

“ thoughts that voluntary move

Harmonious numbers,” —

for no one hesitates to give the name of poetry to the remains of Ossian, so called ; and some of the best critics have reckoned Fenelon’s *Telemachus* as an epic.

If, abandoning the form, we look to the matter of poetry to sustain a definition, we shall find, at least, a great diversity of judgment among those who have treated such questions. Following the highest authority, Aristotle, we should have to make the essence of poetry to consist in *fiction* ; but no one hesitates to give the name to warm expressions of the sincerest feeling, or to faithful descriptions of existing objects ; and the more graphic and true to the reality such expressions and descriptions are, the higher poetry do we account them. To call poetry an *imitative* art is not satisfactory ; and this, not so much because there are other arts which imitate, as because it is not distinguished by any such characteristic from many forms of prose. Horace cannot be thought to give a good definition in the line ;

“ Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poetæ.” †

For to give profit, or pleasure, or rather to give both, ought to be the aim, not only of every other writer, but of every other man, as well. In another place, I apprehend, he gives us the truer idea. It is where he describes the poet as one,

“ Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna sonaturum.” ‡

There must be “genius” in the poet. There must be “the mind divinely touched.” But there must still be something added. Else the man may be great, or

* “Frag.” 2. (“Opera,” p. 265. Ed. Mori.)

† “De Art. Poet.” l. 333.

‡ “Serm.” lib. i. Sat. 3, l. 43.

capable of greatness, in some other walk, and not in this. There must be the *os magna sonaturum*, the *elevated and ornate expression*, and then the poet is fully furnished and manifested. The "ingenium," the "mens divinator," all nations will look for in their poets, and, accordingly, we may find it included, in some way, in all definitions of the art. The forms of utterance of the *os magna sonaturum*, in different nations, will have reference to the approved fashions of the nations to which it proposes to speak. And, accordingly, in this part of the definition, we might reasonably look for the diversity of statement which, for want of making it sufficiently broad, we actually find. Where the forms, chiefly regarded, were the tragedy and the epopee, the ideas of fiction and of imitation would naturally be found connecting or rather identifying themselves with the idea of the manifestation of a poetical mind. While, in countries and times where the range of subjects for poetical treatment was wider, but the manner of verbal composition in treating all had a degree of uniformity, the distinction of poetry from prose would be likely to be seen, more than a careful analysis would warrant, in the circumstance of its conceptions being presented in the clothing of rhyme or of blank verse.

In arranging the form of elevated utterance, in which the *os magna sonaturum* should speak, — the form which should make the distinguishing garb of poetry, so that whenever the conceptions of genius should be arrayed in it, the name of poetry should uniformly be applied, — the classical ancients adopted one scheme, and we have adopted another altogether different. They had reference to the number and arrangement of feet in a verse; and the structure of feet had reference to the number, quantity, and order of syllables. We look to the number not of feet in a verse, but of

syllables; and we attend, not to the quantity of syllables, but to their accentuation. If we and the classical ancients differ so much in the formal structure of our poetry, certainly there is no cause for surprise, if the Hebrews, more foreign from us both than we from one another, should be found to differ from us both, in this respect, as much, at least, as we from Greeks and Romans.

Neither Jewish traditions nor books have conveyed to us any information concerning the structure of Hebrew verse. Yet, that there was verse, is not only highly probable from the consideration, that, while all other nations, ancient and modern, have had their poetry, a people so imaginative as they, could hardly fail to cultivate it; it is not only a reasonable inference from passages which have manifestly every other attribute distinguishing poetry from prose, except that of measured numbers, if that were to be excepted; * but it is matter of history, that David made arrangements for poetical compositions to be sung by the Levites, with accompaniments of instrumental music.†

To recover the structure of Jewish versification is a problem which could not fail to exercise the sagacity of the critics. Its recovery, with any approach to that precision which we so naturally desire, must be given up, I fear, as a hopeless endeavour. How should it be otherwise? The Hebrew has not been a spoken language for more than two thousand years. If, immediately on its ceasing to be commonly spoken, an elaborate notation had been contrived to perpetuate the remembrance of its sounds, such an artifice must

* Every English reader discerns this, in making the transition, for instance, from Ex. xiv. 31 to xv. 1, or from 2 Sam. i. 17 to 19.

† 1 Chron. xv. 16 *et seq.* comp. xvi. 7 *et seq.*; see also 2 Sam. xxii. 1; xxiii. 1; 1 Chron. xxiii. 5; xxv. 1-3.

still, from the nature of the case, have been inadequate to its end; for sounds, corresponding to simple ideas in the mind, are not capable of being defined, nor can they be transmitted except by imitation. But not so much as this was done. The apparatus of the Masorites was not devised, — at least, it did not reach any thing like its present complete form, — till after an interval of nearly or quite ten centuries, during which the tradition of the Jewish schools was of course still less fixed than afterwards. Under these circumstances, that our current pronunciation of the Hebrew, valuable as it is for the main purposes of our use, retains a very close resemblance to what it had as a spoken tongue, cannot be esteemed as in any high degree probable. And that so much as the true division of syllables, without a knowledge of which it would seem impossible to speculate satisfactorily on the laws of verse, has been preserved with any considerable accuracy, is more than any cautious scholar would venture to affirm.

But in this apparently desperate state of the investigation, a peculiar phenomenon of Hebrew poetry comes to our aid. There are certain compositions in the elevated style of language proper to poetry, in the mechanism of which we observe this peculiarity; — that words, separated by about equal intervals, and occurring also at convenient pauses in the sense, are made to succeed each other in the regular order of the letters of the alphabet, from the first to the last of that series. In other words, a clause, or sentence, or succession of sentences, or each clause or sentence in a succession, begins with א; the next with ב; and so on, to the end of the alphabet. Of these alphabetical poems, so to term them, there are twelve in the Old Testament. They have some variety of form. In the hundred and eleventh and hundred and twelfth Psalms,

each initial letter occurs but once, and the next follows after an interval of a few words ; or, to express it differently, each letter begins one line in its proper place in the alphabet. In the third chapter of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, three clauses or lines begin each with the same letter, the three succeeding lines with the next letter, and so on. In the twenty-fifth, thirty-fourth, and hundred and forty-fifth Psalms, the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, and fourth chapter of Lamentations, every other line only, or every stanza of two lines, has its initial letter, in its order. In the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, eight such successive stanzas begin each with the same letter, and the next letter introduces each of the eight following. In the first and second chapters of Lamentations, the stanzas thus discriminated are found to consist each of three such clauses or lines, and, in the thirty-seventh Psalm, of four.* We further remark, that the clauses so designated are of two different descriptions as to length. Those used, for instance, in the hundred and eleventh and hundred and twelfth Psalms, contain only about two thirds as many syllables as those of the elegy in the third chapter of Lamentations.

Here, then, is a fact of the first importance, on which to build our observations and reasonings. When, as in the first three instances which I have named, the initial letters, in their regular alphabetical order, succeed each other at points evidently coincident with the natural

* There are, however, some trifling deviations from this description. For instance, in a very small number of cases there appears a transposition of two verses ; which may have been owing to mistakes of transcribers. Or rather, since the occurrence of *נ* before *י* is frequent in the book of Lamentations, contrary to the received order, it is to be inferred, that there was not a perfect uniformity in the arrangement of the letters, just as, in our English alphabet, there has not been a perfect agreement in the succession of I and J, and of U and V.

division of clauses as to the sense, they mark to us with infallible certainty the beginning and end of a verse. Having, in these instances, thus been aided to distinguish the verses, we can then go on to observe their other characteristics. We immediately perceive, that each verse has a resemblance, in its length and construction, to the clauses, of which, in the other alphabetical poems, two, three, or four are used to make one alphabetical stanza. Each of the clauses, then, in these other poems, we see to be a verse, and our sphere for observation upon the qualities of a verse is so much the further enlarged. Whatever may prove to be its qualities in those compositions where this device of alphabetical arrangement is used, we may safely assume to be its qualities where that is not used; and, accordingly, in proportion to the certainty, clearness, and extent of our discovery of such further attributes of a verse, we possess ourselves of a guide in breaking up the whole Hebrew poetry into lines and stanzas.

For want of taking hold sufficiently of this clue, some have wandered into the supposition, that the Hebrew poetry, like some forms of our own, recognised rhyme for one of its laws, or the recurrence of a like sound at the distance of a prescribed number of feet or of syllables.* There is no call for argument against this theory. It is quite obsolete; and any one may satisfy himself whether it does not deserve to be so, by an inspection of the Hebrew page, taking the alphabetical poems for his safest guide in the distribution of verses. If the Italian language, from its construction, furnishes great facilities for rhyming, of the Hebrew no less is to

* This was Le Clerc's scheme. See his "*Dissertatio Critica de Poësi Hebræorum*," in Ugolino's "*Thesaurus*," Vol. XXXI. pp. 891 *et seq.*

be said, than that, from the same cause, it presents a real difficulty in avoiding the frequent occurrence of words of similarly sounding terminations. With the closely kindred sounds, for instance, of its regular suffixes to the two great parts of speech, nouns and verbs, nothing short of perpetual effort, in the way of awkward periphrasis, would be sufficient to avoid such a result. But the smallest observation will show, that there is no appearance of its having been sought; and, with all our ignorance of the true native sound of the letters, no force of imagination will be sufficient to represent the successive terminations of lines, as having generally or often been so constructed as to strike with a like impulse on the ear.

The theory, again, that the Hebrew poetry acknowledged the same laws as the Greek and Roman, has, probably, no modern advocates. Jerome, in his preface to Job, speaks of the Hexameters and other classical measures of the Hebrews, and, for evidence of their existence, appeals to testimony of Philo, Josephus, Origen, and Eusebius. But the testimony of any or all of these writers is, from their defective information, the furthest possible from satisfactory on such a subject; the known facts in the case contribute nothing to sustain the view; and it appears merely to have been thrown out from some preconceived notion, natural enough to Greeks and Latins, of the structure of classical verse being essential to all poetry.

The hypothesis of Bishop Hare, also, though very famous in its day, is now only to be mentioned as belonging to the history of the subject.* It was ex-

* It was developed and defended in his "*Dissertatio de Veteri Hebræorum Poesi*," a treatise which makes the Preface to his "*Psalmorum Liber*

pressed in the nine following propositions.* 1. In Hebrew poetry, all the feet consist of two syllables; 2. No regard is had to the quantity of syllables; 3. Verses consist of an even, or an odd number, of syllables; 4. When the number of syllables is even, the feet are Trochees; 5. When the number of syllables is odd, the feet are Iambics; 6. Periods generally consist of two verses, often of three or four, sometimes of a greater number; 7. Verses of the same period, are of the same construction, with a few exceptions, in which Trochaic and Iambic lines alternate. In stanzas of four verses, sometimes the first and second, or first and third, are of one structure, and the second and fourth, or third and fourth, of the other; 8. Trochaic verses in the same composition, for the most part, agree together in the number of feet, consisting either of four, which is the most common form, of three, or of five; 9. Iambic verses generally disagree in the number of feet, though the rule is not without numerous exceptions; 10. Verses of both kinds are almost invariably interspersed in the same poem.

The reasoning of Hare, to establish these points, may be seen, correctly characterized and sufficiently refuted, in a note at the close of Lowth's "Lectures on Hebrew Poetry." There were two separate, fatal fallacies, in the argument of the former; the first, a begging of the question, in reducing, arbitrarily, the lines of a single Psalm (the hundred and eleventh) to feet; the second, an inference from a particular to a universal, in conclud-

in *Versiculos metricè divisus*," published by the learned printer Bowyer, in 1736, having the Hebrew text on one page, with the divisions of verses, approved by the author, as the title of the book imports; on the opposite, the same sounds expressed in English letters; and in the lower-margin, a Latin translation and brief commentary.

* "Dissertation," &c. p. xxvii.

ing, that the metrical laws of this Psalm, were the laws of all the rest. Lowth briefly confutes the argument, by repeating it in a different application, which makes it produce, throughout, a course of opposite results. That is, by an equally arbitrary and equally admissible division of the same psalm into different feet, from those proposed by Hare, he makes it the basis of observations, diametrically opposite to those of that writer, and then, resorting to the same process of generalization, proposes his observations as a code of laws for Hebrew metre at large; not meaning, as he has been strangely supposed to do, to supplant the hypothesis he condemns, by another of his own, but simply by arraying opposites, obtained by the same logical process, against each other, to expose the absurdity of the reasoning on which either could be maintained.

The inference of greatest importance and clearness, which we derive from observation of the *acrostic*, or alphabetical, poems, respecting the laws of Hebrew verse, is this, which I express in the words of Lowth;* that there was "a certain correspondence of the verses with one another, and a certain relation between the composition of the verses and the composition of the sentences; the formation of the former, depending, in some degree, upon the distribution of the latter; so that, generally, periods coincide with stanzas, members with verses, and pauses of the one, with pauses of the other."

This correspondence† had been observed, and proposed as the leading principle of Hebrew versification, by

* "Isaiah, a New Translation;" Prelim. Diss. p. x.

† It gave the poetry of the Jews a peculiar fitness to be sung by two choirs in the way of response, as 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7; Ezra iii. 10, 11; Neh. xii. 24.

Rabbi Azarias, an Italian Jew of the sixteenth century.* But Bishop Lowth was the first who wrote largely and satisfactorily upon it. He has given it the appropriate technical name of *parallelism*. Parallelisms of three kinds are observed, which he suitably distinguishes by the names of *synonymous*, *antithetic*, and *synthetic*. I proceed to give examples of each, the first of which will all be drawn from an alphabetical poem.

Synonymous parallels occur, where two or more successive lines convey, in different words, substantially the same sense. Frequently the expression of the latter line, or lines, qualifies or rises upon the meaning of the former. For instance, in the thirty-fourth Psalm ;

- “ 12 Who is he, that loveth life,
And desireth many days, in which he may see good ?
13 Guard well thy tongue from evil,
And thy lips from speaking guile.
14 Depart from evil, and do good ;
Seek peace, and pursue it.
15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,
And his ears are open unto their cry.”

So in the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah ;

- “ 5 Seek ye Jehovah, while he may be found,
Call ye upon him while he is near.
6 Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts.
Let him return to Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him ;
And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

The *antithetic* parallelism appears, when in two or more successive lines, there is an opposition of the expression, or of the sense, or both ; as in the thirty-seventh Psalm ;

- “ 21 The wicked borroweth, and repayeth not ;
But the righteous is merciful, and liberal.
22 For they who are blessed by God shall inherit the land ;
And they who are cursed by him shall be rooted out.”

* For an account of him see Wolf, “Biblioth. Heb.” Vol. I. p. 944.

And in the tenth chapter of Proverbs ;

- “ 1 A wise son maketh a glad father ;
 But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.
 2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing ;
 But righteousness delivereth from death.
 3 The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish ;
 But he casteth away the substance of the wicked.
 4 He becometh poor, that dealeth with a slack hand ;
 But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.”

We find the *synthetic* parallelism not when, as in the examples hitherto given, words and sentiments in successive lines correspond to each other in the way of repetition or opposition, but when the place of words of corresponding character, in successive lines, is the same, nouns in their position in the sentence answering to nouns, verbs to verbs, particles to particles, phrases to phrases ; as in the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs ;

- “ 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household,
 And eateth not the bread of idleness.
 28 Her children rise up, and call her blessed ;
 Her husband also, and he praiseth her.”

In the nineteenth Psalm ;

- “ 7 The Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul ;
 The precepts of the Lord are sure, giving wisdom to the simple ;
 8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart ;
 The commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes ;
 9 The word of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever ;
 The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether ;
 10 More precious are they than gold ; yea, than much fine gold.
 Sweeter than honey, and the honey-comb.”

And in the hundred and forty-eighth ;

- “ 9 Ye mountains, and all hills ;
 Fruit-trees, and all cedars.
 10 Ye wild beasts, and all cattle ;
 Ye animals that creep, and ye birds that fly.
 11 Ye kings, and all people ;
 Princes, and all judges of the earth.

12 Young men and maidens,
Old men, and children."

In the first and third kinds of parallelism which have been mentioned, the correspondence of sense, or construction, or both, often runs, not through two lines only, but through three, four, or even a larger number. In the antithetical class, from its nature, specimens of this class will more rarely be looked for. Yet they do occur. As in the thirty-seventh Psalm ;

" 9 For evil-doers shall be rooted out ;
But they who trust in Jehovah shall inherit the land ;
10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall be no more ;
Thou mayest look for his place, and it will not be found.
11 But the meek shall inherit the land."

The different sorts of parallelism are all frequently presented in the same composition. The antithetic, so suited in its form to clothe a sententious meaning, prevails in the book of Proverbs, though it not unfrequently appears in other books. The synonymous belongs to writings of less point, and an easier flow of expression. But the synthetic, as we should suppose beforehand, is much the most common of all, being suited to a much easier and freer march of poetry, than either of the others. It is evident, also, that this kind of parallelism admits of a far less exact definition than they, on the part of the critic, and requires, by its nature, a less scrupulous observance on the part of the writer. And, though it seems unquestionable, that a certain similarity, as to the sequence of words, in the rhetorical construction of successive lines, makes one of the laws of Hebrew verse, — yet that required similarity admits of so wide a range, that, in cases where guidance is afforded neither by the alphabetical arrangement, nor by the more definite rules of the first two kinds of parallelism, a critic of the present day finds himself left very much

to the direction of his own taste and judgment, and to a rude analogy of the length of lines, in determining where adjoining verses begin and end.

In a word ; the alphabetic poems reveal to us two classes of facts, relating to the construction of Hebrew verse, and capable of, and demanding, application to the other specimens in that style of writing. We learn from them, that the parallelism, as it has been described, in its three forms, made one of the characteristics of versification, and that there were two kinds of lines employed, of very unequal length ; the longer of which, as it occurs in all the elegies of Jeremiah, and in no other alphabetical poems, though it is used elsewhere in poems of similar subject, is very fitly called the *elegiac* verse. With the aid of these two facts, the critic is to proceed, — as best he may, in his ignorance of those arrangements for metrical harmony, which it would be unreasonable to doubt once existed, and were observed by the writer, — to break up, into their original divisions, those portions of the Hebrew poetry where the alphabetical notation fails him. He will have occasion to notice, and avail himself of, a strong prevailing resemblance, in the structure of sentences, between the alphabetical poems and others. In his work upon the latter, he will have the most satisfaction, where their parallelisms are the most distinct. But, with these imperfect advantages, none are to complain, if they are not always satisfied with his division ; and none are to be surprised, if they find the individual decisions of the most experienced and tasteful to be sometimes in conflict with one another.

Leaving the subject of the formal structure, I proceed to a few remarks upon the genius of the Hebrew poetry.

Like the poetry of other nations, that of the Jews

deals largely in the free and fervid language of imagination and passion. Like that of other nations, it has a phraseology, distinguished in its whole complexion from what serves the plainer and humbler uses of prose ; admitting bold ellipses and transpositions, archaisms, unusual and artificial expressions, abrupt introductions and conclusions, perplexed combinations of words, brief unexplained references, paradoxes, almost solecisms. In this poetical phraseology of the Jews, certain idiomatic constructions frequently appear, unknown to the western languages, and claiming to be recognised if we would avoid mistakes ; as, for instance, the abrupt change of person and number, as follows ;

*" They are a perverse and crooked generation ;
Do ye thus requite the Lord, oh foolish people and unwise ? " —
Deut. xxxii. 5, 6.*

*" They sacrificed unto devils, not to God ; to gods whom they knew
not ;
To new gods, that came newly up ; whom your fathers feared not ;
Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful ;
And hast forgotten God that formed thee." — Deut. xxxii. 17, 18.*

*" He is come to Aiath ; he passeth through Migron ;
At Michmash he leaveth his baggage ;
They pass the strait ; at Geba they make their night-quarters ;
Ramah trembleth ; Gibeah of Saul fleeth." — Isaiah x. 28, 29.*

Wherever the object is the condensed expression of a weighty thought, nothing can exceed the severe conciseness and simplicity of the Hebrew Muse. But, on the other hand, no rhetorical array can be more gorgeous, than that which is assumed for the highest efforts of the art. And whether the lavish use of the boldest figures accords with our taste or not, we need, in reading these writings, to learn to enter into the spirit of such a style, not chiefly, that, with a genuine relish, we may enjoy some of the most extraordinary

literary specimens in existence, but that we may be saved from the grossest errors in interpretation. We need constantly to remember, that the writers were Orientals, accustomed as such to the most profuse, the most unsparing, use of imagery, and that of the most adventurous character. Unless we spur ourselves to the effort needful to accompany their flights, their customary forms of conception and speech will leave our tamer imaginations far behind. From the numerous illustrations of this remark, which might be presented, I select the third chapter of Habakkuk, where the prophet is referring to the victories by which the Israelites established themselves in the Holy Land.

- “ 3 God cometh from Teman,
 And the Holy One from mount Paran ;
 His glory covereth the heavens,
 And the earth is full of his praise.
4 His brightness is as the light ;
 Rays stream forth from his hand,
 And there is the hiding-place of his power.
5 Before him goeth the pestilence,
 And the plague followeth his steps.
- “ 6 He standeth, and measureth the earth ;
 He beholdeth, and maketh the nations tremble ;
 The everlasting mountains are broken asunder ;
 The eternal hills sink down ;
 The eternal paths are trodden by him.
7 I see the tents of Cushan in affliction,
 And the canopies of the land of Midian tremble.
8 Is the anger of Jehovah kindled against the rivers,
 Is thy wrath against the rivers,
 Is thy indignation against the floods,
 That thou ridest on with thy horses,
 Upon thy chariots of victory ?
9 Thy bow is made bare ;
 Thine arrows are satiated ; the song of victory is sung.
 Thou causest rivers to break forth from the earth.
10 The mountains see thee and tremble ;
 The flood of waters overflows ;
 The deep uttereth his voice,
 And lifteth up his hands on high.

- “ 11 The sun and the moon stand still in their habitation ;
 Like their light thine arrows fly ;
 Like their brightness the lightning of thy spear.
 12 Thou marchest through the land in indignation ;
 Thou thrashest the nations in anger ;
 13 Thou goest forth for the deliverance of thy people ;
 For the deliverance of thine anointed.”

Another may be seen in the eighteenth Psalm ; where the writer commemorates some personal deliverance.

- “ 1 I love thee, O Jehovah, my strength !
 2 Jehovah is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,
 My God, my strength, in whom I trust ;
 My shield, my strong defence, and my high tower.
 3 I called upon God, who is worthy to be praised,
 And was delivered from my enemies.
 4 The snares of death encompassed me ;
 The waves of destruction filled me with dismay ;
 5 The snares of the grave surrounded me,
 And the nets of death seized upon me.
 6 In my distress I called upon the Lord,
 And cried unto my God ;
 He heard my voice from his palace,
 And my cry came before him into his ears.
 7 Then the earth quaked and trembled ;
 The foundations of the mountains rocked and were shaken,
 Because his wrath was kindled.
 8 A smoke went up from his nostrils ;
 And fire from his mouth devoured ;
 Burning coals shot forth from him.
 9 He bowed the heavens, and came down ;
 And darkness was under his feet ;
 10 And he rode upon a cherub and did fly ;
 Yea, he came flying upon the wings of the wind.
 11 And he made darkness his covering ;
 His pavilion round about him was dark waters and thick clouds
 of the skies.
 12 At the brightness before him, his thick clouds passed away ;
 Then came hailstones and coals of fire.
 13 Jehovah also thundered from heaven,
 And the Most High uttered his voice,
 Amid hailstones and coals of fire.
 14 He sent forth his arrows, and scattered them ;
 Incessant lightnings, and discomfited them.
 15 Then the channels of the deep were seen,
 And the foundations of the earth were revealed,

At thy rebuke, O Jehovah,
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils!

- " 16 He stretched forth his hand from above ; he took me,
And drew me out of deep waters.
17 He delivered me from my strong enemy ;
From my adversaries, who were too powerful for me.
18 They fell upon me in the day of my calamity,
But the Lord was my stay.
19 He brought me forth into a large place ;
He delivered me, because he loved me.
20 Jehovah hath rewarded me according to my righteousness ;
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed
me."

There is a foundation for the universal use of figurative language in the constitution of the human mind, which, when wrought into high action, labors, by such illustration, to do better justice to its conceptions and feelings, than the poverty and tameness of a simple delineation will admit. For the same reason, the forms of trope and figure, in all nations, are essentially the same. The particular, in which the Eastern nations, and among them the Hebrew, differ from others, is, as has been remarked, a more luxuriant taste in their employment, causing them to be a more frequent expedient, and of a more daring character. The simpler forms, metaphor, simile, antithesis, hyperbole, climax, interrogation, exclamation (if the two latter be properly called figures), abound throughout. The bolder and more extended, such as apostrophe, personification, allegory, are of frequent occurrence. Of the first, or rather of a mixture of the two first, the following, from the forty-seventh chapter of Jeremiah, may serve for an example.

- " 6 Ah sword of Jehovah, how long ere thou wilt be quiet?
7 Retire into thy scabbard, rest and be still."

Another magnificent apostrophe occurs in the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, beginning ;

"¹ Arise, enjoy light, for thy light is come;
And the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee."

Prosopopœia, or personification, is constantly used in both of its forms; viz. that in which sensitive being is attributed to an inanimate thing, and that in which action or speech is ascribed, in fiction, to a real character. As instances of the first;

"Let the rivers clap their hands." — Psalm xcvi. 8.

"Doth not wisdom cry; and understanding raise her voice?
At the top of the high places on the way;
At the meeting of the cross-paths stationed?" — Prov. viii. 1, 2.

And of the second;

"The mother of Sisera looked out at the window, and cried through the lattice;
'Why is his chariot so long in coming;
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?'" — Judges v. 28.

Allegory appears, sometimes in its simplest form of an accumulation of connected and suitably related metaphors, as in the passage which begins the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes.

"¹ Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,
Ere the evil days come, and the years arrive,
When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;
² Ere the sun grow dim, and the light, and the moon, and the stars,
And ere the clouds, after rain, return again;
³ In the day when the guardians of the house shall tremble,
And the men of valor shake;
And the grinding-slaves, forsaken, shall stop,
And the watchmen, on the battlements, mourn;
⁴ When the doors shall be shut in the street,
And the sound of the mill not be heard;
When the bird shall with shrieking arise,
And all the daughters of music retire;
⁵ When the noble and the mean shall quake and fear;
And the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper be a burden, and desire be extinguished;

Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners stand
round the street ;

- 6 Ere the silver thread shrink, and the golden bowl be broken,
Ere the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken
at the cistern."

Sometimes this figure appears in the form of a fable with a moral, a form to which, when it occurs in Scripture, we have come in common speech to limit the application of the word *parable*, though in Scripture use the corresponding word in the original has no such limitation. An instance is the well-known parable of Jotham,* and the following from the fifth chapter of Isaiah.

- " 1 Let me sing now a song respecting my friend ;
A song of my friend upon his vineyard !
My friend had a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill.
2 He digged it, and cleared it of stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine,
And built a tower in the midst of it,
And hewed out a wine-press therein ;
Then he looked that it should bring forth its grapes,
But it brought forth sour grapes.
3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah,
Judge ye between me and my vineyard !
4 What could have been done for my vineyard,
That I have not done for it ?
Why, then, when I looked that it should bring forth its grapes,
Brought it forth sour grapes ?
5 But come now, and I will tell you
What I mean to do with my vineyard.
I will take away its hedge, and it shall be eaten up ;
I will break down its wall, and it shall be trodden down ;
6 And I will make it a desolation ;
It shall not be pruned, nor digged,
But shall grow up into thorns and briars ;
I will also command the clouds
That they shed no rain upon it.
7 The vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah the plant of his delight.

* Judges ix. 7, *et seq.*

He looked for justice, and behold murder ;
For righteousness, and behold the cry of the oppressed."* —

To these kinds of allegory, some of the critics, and the theologians generally, add a third, to which they sometimes give the name of the *mystical*. The existence of such a form of composition we shall have occasion to consider as we proceed.

Amplification is a figure, not reckoned to be of the highest character, since the effort to illustrate by an induction of particulars will be often the resort of a certain feebleness of conception, unable to grasp the outlines, and combined completeness, and single expression, of an object. Yet it has its beauty, found, for the most part, in the variety and richness of its exhibition of details. Ezekiel affords numerous extended specimens of it, and they are by no means wanting in the earlier prophets. There is one form of it, especially, to which some of the finest passages owe their force. It is an accumulation of particulars, in order to approximate an idea incapable, in its whole amplitude, of being grasped.

"Canst thou by searching find out God ?
Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ?
It is high as heaven, what canst thou do ?
Deeper than hell, what canst thou know ?
The measure thereof is longer than the earth ;
It is broader than the sea." — Job xi. 7–9.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit,
And whither shall I flee from thy presence ?
If I ascend into heaven, thou art there !
If I make my bed in Hades, behold, thou art there !
Should I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the remotest parts of the sea,
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me !

* See also Psalm lxxx. 8 *et seq.* ; Ezek. xlv. ; xix. ; xxiii. ; xxxi.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall conceal me ;
 Even the night shall be light about me.
 Yea, the darkness hideth [not from thee,
 But the night shineth as the day ;
 The darkness and the light are both alike to thee ! " —

Psalm cxxxix. 7 — 12.

Once more ; the bold figure, called, by some of the rhetoricians, *Vision*, in the use of which a writer, referring to something past, future, or distant, represents it as passing before his view, finds its appropriate place in these writings. Witness that passage of Isaiah, where he alludes, as I understand him, to the future return of his nation from captivity, and, as all would agree, to some future event ;

" The voice of one crying in the wilderness ;
 ' Prepare ye the way of Jehovah ;
 Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.' " —

Isaiah xlviii. 3.

And again,

" Who is this that cometh from Edom ?
 In scarlet garments from Bozrah ?
 This, that is glorious in his apparel,
 Proud, in the greatness of his strength ? " — Isaiah lxiii. 3.

Very often, if we would but rudely understand the representation which poetical imagery is intended to set before our minds ; generally, if we would perceive its main propriety and force ; always, if we would enter into its spirit, and enjoy its beauty, we must have some distinct acquaintance with the objects from which it was drawn ; the objects which it names, or to which it but carelessly or tacitly refers. The sources of imagery, from which the Hebrews drew, were partly such as were common to them with all mankind ; partly they were such as were common to them with a portion of mankind ; partly, such as were peculiar to themselves. Where their works present images to us from the first source, all readers are prepared to apprehend

and relish them ; where from the last two, some knowledge, acquired for the purpose, is necessary, to give that preparation.

Earth, heaven, the heavenly bodies, light, darkness, cloud, storm, dawn, twilight, life, death, age, youth, these are objects and states familiar to all men's observation ; and, wherever the poetry may have been written which contains their names, it will call up the true idea corresponding to them, wherever, in the same or other ages, it may come to be read. Some objects are familiar to the knowledge of a large portion of mankind, but not of the whole ; an expanse of snow will furnish a figure to the writers of the nations in a northern latitude, and a lifeless extent of arid sands to those of a tropical region. The writers of each age, again, wherever found, will have resources for figurative illustration peculiar to themselves, in passing, notorious events, and current, contemporaneous opinions ; and the writers of every single nation will have their own distinct treasuries of poetical ornament, in the history, religion, manners, habits of intercourse, political arrangements ; in the natural objects, the rivers, mountains, plains ; even in the artificial objects, the monuments, the edifices, the arts, and inventions of their country. And he, who would understand their poetry, must be at some pains to know the objects, which, in the use of resources furnished by them, give to the outline and coloring of the finished delineation, the complexion and the attitudes of life.

In many particulars of their condition, such as go to determine the choice of poetical imagery, the Hebrew poets were very differently circumstanced from a western, modern, Christian reader of their works ; and, accordingly, the latter will be constantly at fault in the interpretation of their writings, in proportion as he is

ignorant of ancient history, particularly that of their nation, of Oriental usages, and of the Jewish ritual, opinions, and arts. It is true, that it can be only an approximation which we shall make, after all, to the possession of this knowledge. It is not to be imagined, that we have the means for a thorough acquisition of it within our reach, whatever industry we might be willing to apply in using them; and great mistakes have no doubt been made by the commentators, in consequence of their proceeding on the supposition, that some allusion to history or to worship, for example, must needs be to some particular of it, with which the books in our hands have made us acquainted. But it is no less certainly true, that the wider our knowledge within that circle of subjects to which reference is made, the better will be our capacity to expound them.

The Hebrew poets are often indebted for their figures, to the circumstances, arts, and objects, of their common life. They were a pastoral and an agricultural people. Accordingly, the Psalmist naturally expresses his sense of the tender watchfulness of God, by representing him in the character of a shepherd, in that beautiful lyric, the twenty-third Psalm. The same is the occasion of the comparison of pampered, fierce, wanton men, to bulls of Bashan; * of cherished objects of God's favor, to calves of the stall; † of times of undisturbed tranquillity, to the reposing of the kid by the leopard's side; ‡ of the destruction of the wicked, to the mowing and withering of grass, § to the blowing away of chaff by the wind from winnowing-floors on a hill-top, || to the treading down of grapes in a wine-press, ¶ to

* Psalm xxii. 12.

† Malachi iv. 2.

‡ Isaiah xi. 6.

§ Psalm xxxvii. 2.

|| Psalm i. 4. Isaiah xvii. 13. xli. 15, 16. Jeremiah li. 2.

¶ Isaiah lxiii. 3.

the threshing of wheat under the hoofs of cattle,* and to the gathering in of the harvest with the sickle.† There is no need of justifying such imagery by pleading the authority of Homer and other profane poets.‡ Under the circumstances in which it was used, it was natural and graphic in the highest degree; and if such illustration seems to us to be recommended by force, rather than beauty, it is because our tastes, formed by different circumstances, are biased to a different model.

The funeral rites of the Hebrews illustrate portions of the language of their writers. In the later times, they buried in vast subterranean vaults, with colonnades, niches, and sculpture.§ Hence the sublimely gloomy imagery in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, imitated in the thirty-second chapter of Ezekiel.

The Jewish poetry delights in references to natural objects; and in their use, it presents peculiar felicities in the observance of local proprieties. Michaelis gives it the name of *botanical poetry*, and says, that it exhibits upwards of two hundred and fifty botanical terms. || Palestine, a mountainous country, was subject to sudden floods of the streams that intersected it. Accordingly, the Psalmist says, in his distress, —

“ Deep called to deep; thy cataracts roar;

All thy waves and billows have gone over me.” — xlii. 7.

And a man for whom trouble is anticipated, demanding a sudden escape, if any, is asked what he will do “in the swelling of Jordan.” ¶ Palestine, unlike Egypt, which owed its fecundity to the overflowing of the Nile, was fertilized by heavy dews and rain. Accordingly, with reference to a king’s benefits to his people, it is said;

* Micah iv. 13. Habakkuk iii. 12.

† Joel iii. 13.

‡ E. g. “Iliad,” xx. *ad calc.*

§ See Jahn’s “Archæologia Biblica,” §§ 205 – 209. Maundrell’s “Journey,” &c. pp. 76, 77.

|| Note to Lowth’s Sixth Lecture.

¶ Jer. xii. 5.

"He shall be like rain, descending on the shorn mead ;
 Like showers, which water the earth.
 In his days shall the righteous flourish." — Psalm lxxii. 6. 7.

So Lebanon, with its riven sides, and head buried in the clouds, affords a favorite image, when the element of the sublime is to be introduced into a description ; and Carmel, with its gentler and more cultivated graces, when the sense of beauty is to be awakened.

"The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it ;
 The beauty of Carmel and Sharon." —

Isaiah xxxv. 2.

The countenance of the bridegroom is compared, in Canticles, to Lebanon ; * the head of the bride, to Carmel.†

The sacred places, times, and rites, making a subject so important and so familiar to the mind of a Jew, of course bring their large contribution to the sources of poetical illustration. Even the priest's vestments, and the ceremony of his induction, though affording figures that do not approve themselves to our taste, are introduced, as in the hundred and thirty-third Psalm, in such a way as shows, that, to the taste of the writer, they were peculiarly satisfactory and attractive.

"1 Behold how good and pleasant it is
 For brethren to dwell together in unity.
 2 It is like precious perfume upon the head,
 Which ran down upon the beard,
 The beard of Aaron,
 To the very border of his garments."

Michaelis endeavours to show, that the Hebrew poets have occasionally found resources for illustration in heathen mythology. ‡ But I think he has produced no

* Cant. v. 15.

† Ibid. vii. 5.

‡ "Epimetron de Imaginibus ex Fabulâ Poeticâ," pp. 48 *et seq.* of his
 "In Roberti Lowth Prælectiones Notæ et Epimetra."

clear case of this ; though I apprehend, that, in a different application of it, from what he has attempted, the remark may be shown to hold good ; that is, that it may be made to appear, that there are allusions in the later prophets to fables of Chaldee philosophy.

From the frequent allusions made in the poetry of the Jews to their history, an intimate knowledge of the latter is a most material aid to the successful exposition of the former. There is one point connected with this subject, which demands, from its high importance, a much larger and more careful illustration, than it has yet received. But to such a length have I already extended these remarks, that I can do no more than suggest it. It is, that great events, recorded in the old history, such as the unformed being of Chaos, the Creation, the Deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the Exodus from Egypt, the giving of the law from Sinai, the passing of the Red Sea and of Jordan, make the *topics*, or *common-places*, as the rhetoricians call them, of the later poets, and are used by them as such, with great frequency, reiteration, and freedom. For instance, is a great political disaster threatened ? the downfall of a great kingdom ? The reign of ancient night, as the first chapters in Genesis exhibit it, is represented to have returned again.

“ Behold ! the day of Jehovah cometh,
Terrible, full of wrath and burning indignation,
To make the land a waste,
And to destroy the sinners out of it.
For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof,
Shall not give their light ;
The sun shall be darkened at his going forth,
And the moon shall withhold her brightness.
For I will punish the land for its guilt,
And the wicked for their iniquity.
I will put an end to the arrogance of the proud,
And I will bring down the haughtiness of the tyrants.” —
Isaiah xiii. 9 – 11.

" All the host of heaven shall waste away ;
 And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll,
 And all their host shall fall down,
 As the withered leaf falleth from the vine,
 As the blighted fruit from the fig tree.
 For my sword shall rush drunk from heaven ;
 Behold, upon Edom shall it descend,
 Upon the people under my curse, for vengeance." —
 Ibid., xxxiv. 4, 5.

" I will cover the sun with a cloud,
 And the moon shall not give her light.
 All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee,
 And bring darkness upon thy land,
 Saith the Lord, Jehovah.
 And I will grieve the hearts of many nations,
 When I bring thy destruction among the nations." —
 Ezek. xxxii. 7-9.

Is Israel to be punished for its sins ?

" I look to the earth, and lo ! emptiness and desolation ;
 To the heavens, and there is no light.
 I look to the mountains, and lo ! they tremble,
 And all the hills shake.
 I look, and lo ! there is not a man,
 And all the birds of heaven are fled.
 I look, and lo ! Carmel is a desert,
 And all its cities are thrown down,
 Before the presence of Jehovah,
 Before the heat of his anger.
 For thus saith Jehovah ;
 The whole land shall be desolate,
 Yet will I not make a full end.
 Therefore shall the earth mourn,
 And the heavens above be black,
 Because I have spoken, and I will not repent ;
 I have purposed, and I will not recede from it." —
 Jer. iv. 23-28.

Is it to be restored to favor ? The language intimates no less than a new universal creation.

" I am Jehovah, thy God,
 That rebuketh the sea, when his waves roar ;
 Jehovah of hosts is his name.
 I have put my words in thy mouth,
 And have covered thee with the shadow of my hand,

To establish the heavens, and to found the earth,
And to say to Zion, Thou art my people!" —

Is. li. 15, 16.

Again ; the inflictions of divine displeasure are set forth in figures drawn from the doom of Sodom ;

" Upon the wicked he will rain lightning ;
Fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of
their cup." — Psalm xi. 6.

" It is a day of vengeance from Jehovah,
A year of recompense in the cause of Zion.
Her streams shall be turned into pitch,
And her dust into brimstone,
And her whole land shall become burning pitch.
Day and night it shall not be quenched ;
Its smoke shall ascend for ever ;
From generation to generation it shall lie waste ;
None shall pass through it for ever and ever." —

Is. xxxiv. 8 – 10.

He who undertakes to read the prophetic writings without a constant remembrance, and a frequent application, of the fact last illustrated, can often do nothing but err.

The attempt to reduce the specimens which remain to us, of the Hebrew poetry, to their several classes, is one from which I refrain. It could only be accomplished in the one or the other of two ways ; by the proposal of a new nomenclature, or the reference of these specimens, severally, to a place under one or another of the divisions of modern science. The former would be a useless labor ; the latter an impracticable one. Rhetorical criticism, as an art, is, of course, subsequent to that of writing, to which it refers ; and when, in rhetorical treatises, it assumes the form of a science, it is but a collection of remarks, digested in the form of rules, on such characteristics in the work remarked upon, as have been found on experience to please or displease. Our doctrines of criticism and schemes of rhetoric have

been formed wholly on classical and modern models. The former are substantially applicable to Hebrew composition; because essentially the same sort of beauties, in thought and expression, satisfy, and the same improprieties offend, in all climates and times. But the latter are not so applicable; for the more extended forms of expression of thought, the shapes of combination and composition into which it may be moulded, have no such permanent fashion. The Jews, from the operation of similar causes, had lyrics, elegies, and didactic poems, as well as we. But they had no drama, through the whole course of their history; and to call Job or Solomon's Song a dramatic poem, is merely a torture and abuse of terms. Specimens of the amatory, pastoral, and descriptive classes, might, not without propriety, have been assigned by Lowth to their respective heads, in his attempt to designate the Hebrew poems by the recognised terms of modern art; and he might have ranked, under the denomination of the satire, many of those poems, for which, — deviating, in this instance, from the artificial systems of the schools, — he has provided a separate place, giving the name of *prophetical* poems to the class which they constitute in his arrangement.*

* "Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews"; Lect. 30.

LECTURE XXXIII.

THE ALLEGORICAL AND OTHER ERRONEOUS
METHODS OF INTERPRETATION.

NATURE OF ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION. — OCCASION OF ITS USE BY EXPOSITORS OF SCRIPTURE. — ORIGIN OF THE METHOD IN THE PAGAN SCHOOLS. — ITS ADOPTION BY THE EGYPTIAN JEWS, ESPECIALLY BY ARISTOBULUS AND PHILO; — ITS USE BY CLEMENT, — ORIGEN, — JEROME, — AUGUSTINE, — AND, IN IMITATION OF THESE FATHERS, BY THE MODERN CHRISTIAN CHURCH. — NOT FAVORED BY THE JEWS OF PALESTINE AT THE CHRISTIAN ERA. — THEORY OF DOUBLE SENSES. — OCCASION OF ITS BEING DEvised. — OBJECTIONS TO IT. — THEORY OF TYPES. — NOT KNOWN TO THE ANCIENT JEWS, IN AN APPLICATION TO THEIR EXPECTED MESSIAH. — EXAMPLES OF ITS APPLICATION. — JEWISH CABBALISTIC SYSTEM. — EXAMPLES. — THEORY OF THE PROPHET'S IGNORANCE OF THE SENSE WHICH HE UTTERS. — INFERENCE FROM THE WHOLE VIEW, RESPECTING THE TRUE METHOD OF INTERPRETATION.

THE subject of part of my last lecture, — namely, that of the forms of figurative expression in use among Jewish writers, — naturally conducts to an inquiry, which, in some of its aspects, has particular application to the writings of the Later Prophets; though, in others, it relates equally, or more, to other parts of the Biblical collection. For a general rule, it is well understood, that, when we undertake to interpret a writing, we undertake to ascertain the sense, which the writer had in his own mind, and designed perspicuously to convey to other minds, by language used in its common acceptation. In studying other books besides the Bible, no one thinks of taking any other course. And this kind of interpretation, when applied to the Bible, takes the name of *literal* or *historical* interpretation.

There is a different method, which that collection of books has been thought by many to demand, and which goes by the name of *allegorical* interpretation. In respect to this, two things need to be carefully borne in mind. In the first place, allegorical interpretation is not the interpretation of allegories, any more than the interpretation of any other figure would rightly take its name from that figure; any more, for instance, than the explanation of an hyperbole could be properly called *hyperbolical* interpretation, or the just exposition of irony, *ironical*. If the writer or speaker tells us, that he means an allegory,* or if the author of the narrative declares, that such was the speaker's purpose,† or if, in any other way, the fact is sufficiently indicated, then to interpret the language on that supposition, is to interpret it literally, just as much, as if, instead of allegory, only metaphor or simile had been used. On account of this ambiguity, it were better that the word *literal* were disused, and *historical* adopted in its place. The latter, it is true, has not the advantage of immediately suggesting the sense, which, in this connexion, has become appropriate to it; but it is the only other technical word to which we can have recourse, and its meaning has become sufficiently well fixed by use.

Again; allegorical interpretation is not the use of the words of another, whether containing narrative, doctrine, or something else, to illustrate, in an allegorized application, a sense of one's own. If I wish to frame an allegory to convey the better my own thoughts, just as if I wished to frame a simile or metaphor for that purpose, I may as freely have recourse to something which actually exists, or has occurred, or has been said, as to some figment of my own invention. I do not

* E. g. Matthew xxiv. 32.

† E. g. Matthew xiii. 3.

then attribute an allegory to the writer whose words I use ; I use his words to frame an allegory of my own. I do not then profess to expound an allegory, but to construct one ; it is not the interpretation which is allegorical, but the authorship. It is a neglect of this fact, which has caused St. Paul to be regarded as an allegorical interpreter of the Old Testament Scriptures, which I apprehend that he never, in any instance, was.*

Allegorical interpretation, then, is neither of these processes. It may be defined, "interpretation which proceeds upon the supposition of allegory, where the fact of allegory having been intended is neither apparent from the context, if there be a context, nor, if there be none (that is, if the supposed allegory be co-extensive with the whole composition), from significant characters of the plan, structure, and coherence of the work." Practically, the case stands thus. Whenever such language is used, as "Hear another parable," or "He spake a parable unto them," or when a moral follows or precedes, to which the connected discourse, in a narrative or figurative form, applies, then the context determinately indicates the figure in question to have been designed. But, without some such indication, the presumption is always against the existence of an allegory. It is one of the bolder, and more unusual figures. Unless introduced with some preparation, or succeeded by some comment, it cannot fail to be abrupt, and can hardly fail to confuse, or to be unintelligible, or to mislead. Being unfit to be so used, it is not to be assumed as being so used by a correct

* We have no more a right, from Galatians iv. 24, or Ephesians v. 32, to call Paul by that name, than we should be justified in reasoning from 1 Cor. xv. and Mark iv. 28, that he and the Saviour understood, that seeds were planted, and corn grew, only in a figure.

writer. To imagine it, especially, introduced, without any such explanation, into the midst of a texture of simple history or precept, is to take very serious risk of doing injustice to the writer one is consulting. Whoever would interpret it as being so introduced, is certainly to be called upon first to bring forth his strong reasons, applicable to the individual case, and taking it out of the jurisdiction of the general rule. In the case of an allegorical character being attributed to a whole work, there may be more room for difference of opinion. But, in order to show the existence of an allegory, it will not be enough to prove, that there are difficulties in the adoption of the literal sense. It must be proved further, that the composition is framed conformably to the rules of that kind of composition to which it is supposed to belong; that there is a coherence in the several parts, regarding it as such; and that the whole goes substantially to illustrate the sense supposed to have been in the writer's mind.

When we inquire for the chief causes which have brought allegorical interpretation into such extensive repute and use among expositors of Scripture, we find them to have been strictly of a dogmatical character. And I hold it for a fact, as unquestionable as it is singular, that the class of Christian writers, who have expressed the most displeasure against reasons of this description, supposed by them to have influenced more liberal interpreters in the exposition of single texts, are the same who have been decided by such reasons in the structure of the greater part of their entire system of biblical interpretation, as far as the more difficult parts of Scripture are concerned.

In other words, recourse was had to allegorical interpretation, because it allowed the mind, or rather the imagination, to fix on some acceptable meaning, when

literal interpretation only yielded a sense which the mind was unwilling to receive. The Mosaic cosmogony, so called, was thought to contain statements inconsistent with known facts; and as it did not appear, that this could be allowed without giving up its inspired authority, the supposition of allegory was resorted to, to escape the conclusion. The Canticles, in their literal sense, seemed to make no appropriate part of a collection of inspired compositions; and the same scheme was necessary to reconcile their existence there with a theory, with which the mind was indisposed to part, concerning the nature of that collection. I do not say, that allegorical interpretation has never been employed except on the occasion of difficulties, which it was thought could not otherwise be solved. Once introduced, authorized, and established, strong reasons will occur to every one, why it should naturally become popular, and of familiar use, affording, as it does, such easy exercise to the writer's ingenuity, and so much of the amusement of novelty to the reader's mind. But what gave it the currency and authority, which enabled it to be afterwards applied so much more extensively, was its facility in solving difficulties, and its indulgence in leaving the interpreter in possession of opinions he was reluctant to relinquish.

Nor was it an invention of Scriptural interpreters. To show this, it would be irrelevant to enlarge upon the use of allegorical interpretation, as it may have subsisted in various times and countries. It is, of course, subject to be resorted to, whenever and wherever the fixed opinions of readers, and the literal sense of writings which they profess to reverence, are incapable of being reconciled together. All that is directly to our purpose is to say, that the Jewish schools had it from the Pagan, which had resorted to it for a similar

purpose, and the Christian writers adopted it from both.

The first subject, upon which we know the system of allegorical interpretation to have been extensively employed in classical antiquity, was the poems of Homer. When, in a growth of civilization, which those wonderful writings had done more than all other agents to quicken, the leading minds of Greece had been brought to views on questions of philosophy and theology, ill according with the simple and sensual mythological system which Homer had invested with such poetical attractions, while, at the same time, his works had too much hold on the popular mind to be discarded, even if the wiser part could themselves have consented to bear the loss, — the method of allegorical interpretation was resorted to, to reconcile the Homeric representations with the speculations, so different from them, which had come into vogue. Egypt, under its Greek line of Ptolemies, was a famous scene of this kind of criticism, which, in respect to Homer, has been thought to have had no less considerable a projector than Plato.* In the Greek schools of Egypt, the Jews, members and descendants of the colonies which had been carried thither by Alexander and Ptolemy Lagus, naturally became acquainted with it, and were as naturally led to think of applying it, for a similar reason, to their own sacred writings. Many of them adopted the tenets of the leading sects of Greek philosophy, the Stoic, the Peripatetic, the Academic, and, more recently, the Eclectic. For them it of course became a problem, to reconcile their own law, which, whether from national pride or personal conviction, they were

* See Rosenmüller, "*Historia Interpretationis*," &c. Vol. I. p. 22. Döpke, however, assigns to it an earlier origin. See his "*Hermeneutik der N. T. Schriftsteller*," &c. p. 102.

unwilling to abandon, with the tenets of those systems; and they proceeded to deal with it as their Pagan masters in philosophy had dealt with Homer and the other early poets. Aristobulus, a Jew and Peripatetic in the reign of Ptolemy Philometor, wrote and dedicated to that prince an allegorical commentary on the Law of Moses, of which considerable fragments remain; but we are best acquainted with the practice of such interpretation, among the Egyptian Jews, from the works of Philo, the Academic, in the first century of the Christian era, in which his comments upon the Law, for he did not write upon the Prophets, are altogether of that character.

Philo says nothing of Christianity; nor is there ground for affirming, that he was acquainted with it. Under like influences to those which had formed his mind, was formed that of Clement, the head of the Christian school at Alexandria, towards the end of the second century. He, too, was a pupil of the Greek schools, to which people, he says, that philosophy was communicated by angels.* Clement, accordingly, had a like use, to that which has been remarked on in other cases, for a system of interpretation which should make the sacred writings speak such a sense as the interpreter desired. Two of his doctrines are these, as expounded in his "*Stromata*," or *Various Discourses*. "All sacred Scripture, as well of the Old as of the New Testament, has an allegorical sense."† And again; "The literal sense of holy Scripture, obvious to all, creates only an elementary faith; the allegorical sense conducts to a higher wisdom."‡

Clement's was a name of high authority in the church, sufficient to give wide currency to notions on inter-

* "*Stromata*," Lib. vii. p. 505. Ed. Lugd. Bat.

† Ibid., Lib. v. pp. 406 *et seq.*

‡ Ibid., Lib. vi. pp. 489 *et seq.*

pretation which, from any cause, he favored. But it was quite eclipsed by that of his pupil and successor, Origen ; in some respects, the greatest genius, and, beyond all dispute, the most learned man, of Christian antiquity. Jerome, the next most considerable person in this estimate, does not hesitate to call him, "after the Apostles, the master of the churches." * "The rest of the Fathers," says Simon, in his "Histoire Critique," "have done little more than copy Origen." † He, too, was addicted to the prevalent philosophy, and conceived, that he had the task of bringing the records of his faith to its support as best he might ; and the success which, under this influence, he had, by the force of his talents, and the weight of his name, in establishing allegorical interpretation as the practice of the church, was so decisive and conspicuous, as to cause what his predecessor had done, in this way, to be now of very little consideration. "He carried so far," says Simon, "the spiritual sense, that he seems even to destroy the truth of the history." † He held, to use his own words, that, "as man, according to Plato, consists of three parts, body, mind, and spirit, so holy Scripture has three senses, the historical and literal, the moral, and the mystical and spiritual. And as the body," he continues, "is inferior to the soul, just so much is the literal sense of Scripture to the internal, or the allegorical." ‡

Origen effectually established the theory and the practice, which have descended from him, through all ages of the church, to our own day. The next of the leading names, in the history of ancient interpretation, is that of Jerome, at the end of the fourth and begin-

* Simon, *Hist. Crit. du V. T.* p. 391.

† Idem., "*Hist. Crit. du N. T.*" p. 47.

‡ Rosenmüller, *ubi supra*, Vol. III. p. 17 ; comp. Mosheim's "*Commentaries*," p. 638.

ing of the fifth century. Jerome was the chief immediate oracle of the Fathers of the Latin church in matters of mere philology. He has nowhere spoken so extravagantly as Origen of allegorical interpretation, and he has often given judicious and acute expositions of the literal kind. But he has also dealt not sparingly in the exhibition of mystical senses, and, on the whole, did nothing, effectually, to check the taste for such.

Augustine was Jerome's contemporary, and, with much less learning than that father, had a love for allegories, and, at the same time, an ascendancy in the church, which would have effectually controlled Jerome's influence in favor of a better style of commenting, had it been even much more decided, and more uniform, than it was. With very little Greek and no Hebrew, Augustine undertook to write upon Genesis against the Manichæans, who complained of alleged absurdities in the literal sense of that book. It might have been anticipated, under his circumstances, what would be the nature and what the success of the reply. He entitled it, "The Book of Genesis imperfect, when read according to the letter." He found it so unmanageable, even when considered as allegory, as to be brought to confess, that his immature knowledge was crushed under such a load;* but this did not prevent him from writing comments upon the Psalms, which are but made up of allegorical subtleties.

Origen, Jerome, and Augustine, (especially, as has been said, the first, of whom the two others were but pupils,) were the teachers of the science and art of interpretation to the Christians of their own and following ages. Under such masters, the Catholic church could

* "Tyrocinium meum sub tantâ sarcinæ mole succubuit" ("Retractationum," Lib. i. cap. 18.); and again; "Plura quæsitâ, quam inventa sunt" (Ibid., Lib. ii. cap. 24).

not be expected to gain much acquaintance with the identity between just exposition and historical exposition, supposing that identity to exist. And when the Reformation came, not only were all ancient aids to exposition (formed upon the allegorical model), and all ancient principles, rules, and practices of exposition too well established and familiar to be soon relinquished, or even suspected, but Augustine himself, a wholesale allegorist, was the great master of the Reformers, and oracle of the Lutheran and Calvinistic leaders. These facts go to show, that those peculiar methods of exposition, which have retained a high credit to the present time, had no better origin than the schools of a long ago exploded philosophy in Egypt.

And here I need to revert to the history of this practice among the Jews. That it existed, and how it arose, among the portion of that people who were colonized in Egypt, we have already seen, in the instances of Aristobulus and Philo, the one in the second century before, the other about the time of, the promulgation of our faith. Philo speaks of a community of his countrymen, by whom he has been commonly understood to mean the Therapeutæ, (though the correctness of that opinion is not important in this argument,) who gave their whole time to contemplations on the law, with a view to the investigation of its mystical senses; "regarding," says he, "the law as an animal, of which the literal precepts were the body, and the secret, invisible meaning the soul." * And that in the Jewish schools of the east and west, from the time of the composition of the Talmud down, the practice of allegorical interpretation has more or less prevailed, is also to be allowed. Nor is it difficult to account for this its wide diffusion. The sect of the Therapeutæ spread from

* "De Vita Contemplativa," "Opera," Tom. II. p. 483. Edit. Mang.

Egypt, where it seems to have originated, into Palestine, and probably into all the countries of the dispersion ; and the writings of Philo, who himself visited Rome, could scarcely fail, when they came to be circulated, to create a taste for his style of exposition. But, so far as I can see, it has altogether too easily been taken for granted, that, in our Saviour's time, allegorical interpretation was the favorite method of interpretation in Palestine. The Sadducees and the Pharisees were there the prevailing sects. Of the former we have no historical notice, that they loved allegory ; and the notions and spirit of the latter seem, on the contrary, to have been those of the strictest, the most unbending, the most bigoted literalness. I know no instance, in the New Testament, where, from remarks in relation to them, or specimens of their conversation, it appears, that they gave mystical interpretations of Scripture. As far as their rejection of Jesus was grounded on their expositions of their sacred writings, the very reason of their rejecting him was, that he did not appear to them to correspond in character and condition with the literal sense of those writings. They held the works of the Later Prophets to be divinely inspired. They took the literal meaning for their true one ; and, conceiving that Jesus did not fulfil this, they said, he could not be their Messiah. Had they allegorized those works as later commentators have done, they would have perceived no such discrepancy. So Origen testifies, that "hard-hearted and unlearned men of the circumcision refused to believe in the Saviour, because they thought they ought to follow the literal reading of the Prophets concerning him." *

* "Philocalia," ed. Spencer, p. 6. — I conceive that Faber, in his "Bampton Lectures" (Vol. II. pp. 28-32), has stated this matter

Connected with the subject of allegorical interpretation, is another peculiar theory and method of exposition, approved by many commentators, ancient and modern, called that of *double senses*. Interpreters have read a passage in its connexion, and they have seen, or supposed themselves to see, that, according to the established and admitted rules of language, it was to be understood in a certain manner. That sense was what the text and the context demanded. So understood, no facts of etymology or syntax were rejected; no connexions disturbed; no probabilities violated. So understood, the passage was congruous in itself, and filled out suitably the place where it was found. But, looking into another part of Scripture, where the passage in question is cited or referred to, they have thought, that they found a different meaning put upon it, and that by inspired authority. Unable, therefore, to give up their first conclusion, but understanding a different one to be prescribed to them by an infallible interpreter, they have resorted to the hypothesis, that the writer to be interpreted had both meanings in view; namely, the meaning which they themselves see him to have entertained, and also that which has been detected in his words, by the authorized interpreter, who, they think, understood those words in a different manner.

But, on the premises from which he reasons, it is plain, that the advocate of a double sense is not led directly to the theory which he adopts, but to the choice between that and another view, which other deserves, on every account, to be preferred. The authorized interpreters, to whom he refers, have never said, that a pas-

correctly, though he does not seem to have been aware of the importance of the statement, and in other parts of his work has given different representations.

sage of Old Testament Scripture should be taken in two senses. Nothing like it. What they have said, if the advocate of double senses understands them rightly, is, that the passage in question has a sense, different from the sense which he had ascribed to it. On his own showing, then, he is to admit, that he did not understand the force of the passage; that it did not convey to his mind, what it was intended by its writer to convey; that he was mistaken in respect to it, and is now able to correct his mistake, by new and better information. This is what, on his own premises, he must own, and all that he must own. But, while he receives the new sense, still to adhere to his own, and insist that he was right, when he has just been brought to own that he was wrong, is not only to humor a pertinacity of private opinion, which he has affected to renounce, but it is to encounter unnecessary additional difficulties of a very serious character. When one, whom we acknowledge to be, in a given case, a better judge than ourselves, tells us, that we have been in error, our course is to adopt his opinion instead of our own, and not to endeavour to adopt his opinion along with our own, our own being different. This must be our course, if we would be judicious and cautious, as well as if we would be modest, critics. And, in fact, to look for one sense alone, is the course which critics of reputation, whatever be their varieties of theological opinion now, in fact, for the most part, agree in taking. The other theory is to be looked on as now condemned by a well-nigh unanimous voice of those who are conversant with inquiries of the kind.

Certainly it deserves to be so. The statement of two senses in a passage, indeed, is nothing short of a contradiction in terms. The meaning of a passage is neither more nor less than what that passage was designed to

signify. Be that meaning ever so comprehensive, and consisting of ever so detached parts, still, if it be true, that the passage was intended to convey it, it is then the meaning of the passage, and its one meaning. Assume as much as we will to be embraced in the designed significance of a given combination of words, — and assume it correctly or incorrectly, — it is impossible that, strictly and carefully speaking, we should attribute more to the words than their sense, their single sense.

But, waving this objection, — which, it may be said, lies rather against the accuracy of the description of the theory, than against the theory itself, — the plan of interpreting a sentence, or longer composition, as meaning two things alike, is inconsistent with the established laws of language. More than one meaning, clothed in the same form of words, is the same as no meaning clothed in those words. For a meaning is something definite. It is something distinguishable, and distinguished, from all other meanings. As much as the idea of an individual man excludes other men, so much the idea of a sense excludes other senses. The meaning which I have in my mind, I may clothe but imperfectly in words. But still, the words, if they are significant, have one sense, — one sense which is theirs, though it may not correspond with the exactness that it should, to the sense which is in my mind. I may, doubtless, by unskilfulness or design, put together words in such a manner, that they will bear to have, indifferently, one or another sense put upon them ; and this is called, in the one case, ambiguity, and in the other, duplicity. But it is not two meanings, which I then design to convey, or for which he, who hears or reads my words, thinks of looking. In the former case, I had a meaning, but failed properly to convey it. In the latter, I did not propose to convey a true meaning. And in both, the interpreter

may fail to receive a meaning from me. He does not receive two meanings.

Again; the idea, that a writer intended more than one meaning, in a given combination of words, leaves the interpreter always unsatisfied concerning the use which they were intended to serve. No amount of care and labor will obtain satisfaction for him. When we understand, that we are to look for one meaning only, there is a guide to the judgment in interpretation, and an end to the process. We compare different probable meanings together, and when we have concluded which is most probable, our work is done. But if, after having reached one meaning, we are still to look for another behind it, why should the second content us, any more than the first? Why, having found the second, should we not go on to look still for the third, and after the third, for the fourth, and so on, indefinitely? * Interpretation is no longer, under such circumstances, a practicable art. However far a reader may have prosecuted his inquiry, he has no assurance that his work is not still before him, as much as ever. He has not erred, it is true, in his supposed past discoveries. The senses he has attributed, are real senses. But how can he be assured, that another sense, better than all he has found, has not yet eluded him? Interpretation, which never authorizes a persuasion that the work is done, is clearly no interpretation whatever.

Once more; a prophecy with a double meaning, would be incapable of affording the testimony which prophecy, in itself, may afford. It is impossible to prove, from the terms of a prediction, that it was intended to refer to some one person or event, while we insist, at the same

* The later Jewish doctors carried out the scheme, when they said, that every word in Scripture has seventy-two faces.

time, that it was intended to refer, and that it actually corresponds, to some other person or event. Is it said, that we may be bound to take this view, by the authority of one, who declares, that, besides being fulfilled in another person, it is also fulfilled in himself? But then, plainly, it ceases to be evidence to the authority of that interpreter, depending, as it does, on his authority, for its own interpretation. We cannot say, first, that Jesus was the Messiah, because certain descriptions in prophecy, applying to him, prove it; and then, that they do apply to him, because he, being Messiah, so declares. This is fully owned by some who admit the theory of double senses.* Yet such a critic as Grotius finds only two passages in the Minor Prophets, which he regards as applicable to Jesus, in any other than a secondary sense.†

The doctrine of secondary senses, disesteemed as it now is, has been regarded, in other days, as the great means of reconciling supposed declarations in the New Testament concerning the meaning of the Old, with that different sense of the Old, which the text and context appeared to disclose to a careful reader. Origen used it largely for this purpose, in controversy with unbelievers; and when, a century ago, it began to be seriously assailed, it found a temporary shelter under the shield of Warburton, which, like that faced with Medusa's head, repelled assaults not so much by its solidity, as by its scowls and venom.‡ Another application of the same principle, once, (if we are not to say, still,) held in high consideration, was made to the theory of *Types*, or of actual, substantial, (in distinction from verbal,) re-

* For instance, by Bishop Marsh, at the beginning of his twenty-first Lecture.

† Haggai ii. 7 *et seq.* Mal. iii. 1 *et seq.*

‡ See "Divine Legation," &c. Book vi. § 6.

presentations of persons, events, and doctrines of the Gospel, by persons, events, and observances of the old economy. The idea was, that forms of worship, and rules of action, prescribed by the ancient ritual, besides serving their more obvious purposes, were designed to prefigure, through the ages previous to the Gospel, prominent parts of the evangelical system; and that men did not live their own lives only, nor events stand merely on their own ground; but that men were made, under an overruling Providence, to lead lives more or less resembling that of the coming Messiah, in order to present, as it were, a practical prediction of him; and that events so fell out, under the like oversight, as to be significant, through their similarity, of other future events.

For a type, it is to be well remembered, is not some person, thing, or event, bearing such a likeness to a subsequent person, thing, or event, as admits of comparison between them, and of illustration of the latter by reference to the former; but it is something which was originally intended to prefigure and point to some other thing. Paul, for instance, in a very natural use of figurative language, compared the recognition of Christians to be God's people in the water of baptism, to the recognition of the Jews as his people in their passage through the Red Sea; * but he does not say, though he has very erroneously been understood to mean, that the latter was designed to be a type of the former. "A typical sense," says Glass, † "occurs, when, under external acts or prophetic visions, secret things, whether present or future, are figured; and, especially, when events of the Old Testament presignify, or shadow out, events of the New." "A type," says Outram, ‡ "may be defined

* 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

† "Philologia Sacra," Lib. ii. Pars 2, Tract. 2, § 2.

‡ "De Sacrificiis," p. 201.

to mean, a symbol of something future, or an example so prepared, so arranged, by God, as, by his institution, to prefigure that future thing. And what is thus prefigured is called the antitype." Faber does not undertake to define types, but he says, that, "without the key which they afford to unlock the hidden meaning of the Pentateuch, the whole ritual contained in it will be wholly unintelligible; but, when considered as an allegorical or hieroglyphical description of certain future transactions, the wonderful contrivance and wisdom of the whole institution will be apparent." * "God, intending," says Warburton, "to record the future sacrifice of Christ in action, did it by the periodic sacrifice of a lamb without blemish." † "To constitute one thing the type of another," says Marsh, "as the term is generally understood in reference to Scripture, something more is wanted than mere resemblance. The former must not only resemble the latter, but must have been designed to resemble the latter. It must have been so designed in its original institution. It must have been designed as something preparatory to the latter. The type, as well as the antitype, must have been pre-ordained; and they must have been pre-ordained, as constituent parts of the same general scheme of divine providence. It is this previous design, and this pre-ordained connexion, which constitute the relation of type and antitype. Where these qualities fail, where the previous design and the pre-ordained connexion are wanting, the relation between any two things, however similar in themselves, is not the relation of type to antitype. The existence, therefore, of that previous design, and pre-ordained connexion, must be clearly establish-

* "Bampton Lectures," Vol. II. p. 55.

† "Divine Legation," Vol. V. p. 263.

ed, before we can have authority for pronouncing one thing the type of another." *

I do not know, that the ancient Jews had any notion of the great men of their history, or the ritual arrangements of their law, having been intended to prefigure their Messiah, though Faber attempts to prove the latter point, — inconclusively, as usual.† As early, however, as the time of Justin, not to speak of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which traces of it appear, the system had come into use among Christians, with this application. That Father speaks of the paschal lamb, as typifying Jesus ; and, specifying several particulars of the manner in which the lamb was prepared, follows the idea of a type into various details, exceedingly revolting to a good taste. The two goats of the day of expiation, he regards as prefiguring Christ's two advents ; the offering, by a cured leper, of a quantity of meal, as significant of the bread of the Christian eucharist ; and the bells, hanging to the robe of the high-priest, as a symbol of the twelve apostles of the eternal high-priest, of whom, says he, David declares, that "their sound is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world." ‡

So attractive is this method of interpretation to a fanciful ingenuity, that, once admitted to be legitimate, we cannot wonder to see it much followed, and that into singularities and extravagances corresponding to the varieties of genius of the adventurers in this field. It has derived its best authority from the common opinion, that Paul was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; for, of other New Testament authority, all would allow that it has little, and in my opinion it has

* "Lectures," Part III. pp. 105–6.

† "Bampton Lectures," Book II. § 2. chap. 5.

‡ "Dial. cum Tryphone," p. 259 *et seq.*

none, to plead. In "Owen's Commentary on the Hebrews," one may see with what strong conviction of its correctness the view may be enlarged upon; and the wide range, which the imagination may take in tracing such correspondences between the Old Testament and the New, is evinced by such books (lately, if not still, much esteemed by a large class of Christians) as Mather "On Types," and McEwen's "Grace and Truth." In these works alone, no less than twenty Old Testament characters are represented as types of the Messiah; while a thorough survey is taken of objects, events, and places, mentioned in the Jewish history, and of rites, and even utensils, of the Jewish worship, to point out the significant allusions intended in them to the better dispensation, which was to come in the fullness of time.

The typical system has, as might be expected, furnished arguments for all sorts of opinions, true and false, established and novel, moral and controversial. From the fact, that the shafts of the pillars in Solomon's temple were directed to be ornamented with lily work, a commentator, quoted by Calmet,* inferred the truth (as typically implied), that, "as ministers are pillars of the Gospel church, and lilies are emblems of the care of Providence, therefore ministers ought to leave to Providence the care of their bodies." Pope Innocent the Third wrote to the Greek Emperor, to prove the supremacy of the Papal See from the first chapter of Genesis, urging that, by the greater light, set to rule the day, was meant the Pope, and, by the lesser light, set to rule the night, the civil magistrate; "but that," he explains, "which presides over the day, that is, over spiritual things, is superior to that which presides over

* "Dictionary of the Holy Bible." Art. *Types*.

the night, that is, over carnal; so that, as great a difference is to be acknowledged to exist between priests and kings, as between sun and moon." Cardinal Belarmine, for the Romanists, urged, that the Protestant Reformation was typified by the rebellious secession of the ten tribes, under Jeroboam, from their lawful king; but the Lutherans retorted, that that event rather prefigured the secession of Rome from Christianity.* One of the Romish doctors, commenting on part of the eighth Psalm, writes as follows; "'God hath put all things under his feet;' that is, under the feet of the Roman Pontiff; 'all sheep,' that is, Christians; 'and oxen,' that is, Jews and heretics; 'and the beasts of the field,' meaning, Pagans; 'and the fishes of the sea,' viz. souls in purgatory."†

* Marsh, Lecture 18.

† I take the example from Glass ("Phil. Sac." Lib. ii. Pars. 1. Tract. 2. § 3. Art. 6.), to whom I refer for numerous others of the same quality. The sacerdotal vestments have made a great subject of speculation in this way, on the part both of Jews and Christians. "The Jews," says Jennings ("Jewish Antiquities," Vol. I. p. 245), "discover a world of philosophy in them. Josephus makes the high-priest's linen garment represent the body of the earth; the glorious robe, heaven; the bells and pomegranates, thunder and lightning. Or otherwise, the ephod of various colors, is the universe; the breast-plate, the earth in its centre; the girdle, the sea; the onyx stone on each shoulder, the sun and moon; the twelve stones in the breast-plate, the twelve signs of the Zodiac, or the twelve months in the year; the mitre, heaven; and the golden plate, with the name of God engraven on it, the splendor of the divine majesty in heaven. Philo philosophizes on them in a similar manner.

"But the Talmudical doctors assign them a more religious and moral signification; the eight garments denoting circumcision, which was to be performed on the eighth day; and each garment being to expiate a particular sin; the breeches, uncleanness; the girdle, theft; the ephod, idolatry; the breast-plate, perverse judgment; the bells, evil speaking; the mitre, and the golden plate on the forehead, pride and impudence.

"The Cocceian divines, who have great talents at allegorizing, find out in them, in a manner, all spiritual blessings and graces. Braunius, in particular, makes the mitre signify wisdom; the robe, righteousness; the breeches, sanctification; and the girdle, redemption: all which 'Christ is

It is clear enough, that, in such a manner of interpretation, almost any inference may be deduced from almost any premises; yet it is remarkable, how easily writers, who theoretically have no partiality for mystical exposition, permit themselves to fall back into this particular form of it. Hahn, for instance, of Leipsic, a critic of the orthodox school, who has recently written not ill against the doctrine of double senses, is careful to except, from the condemnation which he passes upon them, the doctrine of typical representations. Bishop Marsh, while he admits, or rather maintains, their existence, still urges a caution concerning them, which, according to my view of the facts, makes his theory quite inoffensive. He says, that, "to guard against errors of a rash imagination, we ought never to suppose a type, except in the cases where Scripture has itself pointed them out." As I am well satisfied, that authoritative Scripture has in no instance done this, I should not care, for any practical purpose, to insist on any thing more.

A departure, not, I think, very much wider, from sound principles of interpretation, in the way of double senses, was made by the framers of the Jewish Cabbalistic system, which has been adopted, to some extent, by Christian interpreters, of like habits of mind. This system, which was matured in the Jewish schools during the dark ages, consisted of various departments, only one of which, however, comes under our notice in this connexion. According to it, letters, instead of being taken in their alphabetical force, so as, in their combination, to represent words, which words are, in their

made of God unto believers.' By the other vestments, are denoted the principal benefits of the gospel; election and adoption, by the ephod and the pectoral; vocation, or effectual calling, by the bells; faith, by the golden crown, &c."

eenth chapter, thirtieth verse, the נ in מְנַשֶּׁה [Manasseh] is *suspended* above the line, leaving the word in the line to be מֹשֶׁה [Moses], “the writer intending,” says the gloss, “to intimate, that, though Gershon was lineally a son of Moses, he was in character no better than a son of Manasseh.” In the first and last verses of the Bible, the letter נ occurs six times in each, and, since the numeral force of this letter is a thousand, the Rabbins concluded, that the world was to last six thousand years. To show that the world was created at the beginning of the year, they argued, that the numeral force of the letters in the words בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא [in the beginning created] is the same with that of those in the words בְּרֵאשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וַיִּבְרָא [in the beginning of the year it was created]. From this source they derived answers to questions of casuistry. For instance, in the fifteenth chapter of Numbers it is said, “Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the Lord.” The quantity is not prescribed; but the Cabbalists observed, that the letter מ, whose numeral power is forty, begins and closes the verse, and hence inferred, that a fortieth part should be taken for the legal contribution; and Glass argues, after the same manner, that the Jewish doctors had acquainted themselves with the doctrine of the Trinity; for, says he, “they said, that אֱמֶת *truth*, was a name fitly applied to God, and that the numeral force of its letters, ninety-one, was the same with that of the letters in Jehovah, taken three times, as they are found in the sixth chapter, fourth and fifth verses of Deuteronomy, along with the letters in the word אֶחָד *one*; and why,” he asks, “should they have argued thus, unless they believed, that God was both one and three?” *

* Glass, “Philologia Sacra,” Lib. ii. Pars 1, Tract. 2. § 3. Art. 7. An account of the Cabbalistic system, as applied both by Jews and Christians, may be seen in Basnage, “Histoire des Juifs,” Liv. iii. chap. 10–29.

Specimens of a Christian use of the same artifice are as follows. A commentator on the word *Alleluia*, in the nineteenth chapter, first verse, of the Apocalypse, said, that *Al* denoted *Altissimus* [the highest]; *Le*, *levatus est in crucem* [he was raised upon the cross]; *Lu*, *lugebant Apostoli* [the apostles mourned]; and *Ja*, *jam resurrexit* [now he has risen again]. In the fifteenth verse of the sixth chapter of Genesis, a direction is given for the ark to be built three hundred feet long, fifty wide, and thirty high. Herein, it has been remarked, is a reference to the name of Jesus, expressed in Hebrew letters, יֵשׁוּעַ. For if the length of the ark be divided by its height, the result is the number ten, which is expressed in Hebrew by the letter י; the proper expression of the length is יָ, the second letter of the name; and the length divided by the width gives the number six, denoted by the letter ו. By a similar process, the name of the Saviour is detected in the dimensions of the temple, prescribed at the beginning of the sixth chapter of the first Book of Kings.*

The system of Cabbalistic interpretation has other branches besides those of which I have given examples, and I might multiply examples in the same almost without limit; but those presented will give a sufficient idea of its nature. "As to the Cabbalistical method of interpretation," says Glass, "we are to distinguish between that Cabbala which is erudite, and conformed to the analogy of the faith, and that which is superstitious, impious, and discordant from that analogy; and, while the former is approved, or admitted, the latter is to be given over to superstitious men.† A considerate critic will see no clear ground for this distinction, and not be desirous of making a reservation of any part of the system in the proposed surrender to superstitious men.

* Glass (*ubi supra*).

† Glass (*ubi supra*), p. 311.

Reference to the subject now is chiefly of use in helping to show us, into what endless extravagances men will be sure to run, as soon as they begin to interpret language not as language, — and, of course, demanding to be interpreted according to well-settled philological principles, — but as the sign of thought in some other way. If any one thinks, that it is not plain speech, but riddles of some kind, — anagrams, charades, types, or any other, — that the Scriptural interpreter is to explain, the burden of proof unquestionably lies on him ; and yet further, the essential and insurmountable difficulty remains, that the diversity, and obscurity, and uncertainty of the results obtained from such a management of the sacred writings, refute the supposition of its correctness. In respect to a good riddle, when the solution has been proposed, no doubt is left, either that it was meant for a riddle, or that the answer is found. The harmonious bearing of all the specified conditions, — various, and heterogeneous, and apparently irreconcilable as they were, — on one object, and on no other, proves it, beyond denial. But who will say, — to leave other considerations for the moment out of view, — who will say that even any such result is obtained, from interpretations of Scripture, which treat it as presenting any of the forms of that kind of composition ? Nor has even a riddle two senses, though, in an erroneous representation of its nature, it has been adduced as an analogy by those who would sustain the doctrine of two senses in Scripture. All its words, on the contrary, are studiously chosen, to bear, — in a peculiar manner, no doubt, — on one sense ; and, until that is found, every one sees, that they convey no sense whatever.

A few words demand to be said on yet another method, which, in the decline of the theory of double senses, has been resorted to, to reconcile the fact, that

the Old Testament writers meant one thing, with the supposed fact, that in the New Testament they are represented to have meant a different. Philo had used, in different places, the following language. "The prophets are the interpreters [*ἐρμηνεύται*] of God, whom he uses as organs in revealing what he sees fit." * "A prophet utters nothing of his own, but merely that which belongs to another, and which he but echoes from within." † "A prophet utters nothing of his own, but is an interpreter, merely announcing what another prompts; and, so long as he is under the influence of inspiration, he has no proper consciousness of his own, for the power of thought departs, and quits the dwelling-place of the soul, and the Divine Spirit comes in, and abides there, and influences all the organic powers of the voice, so that they will utter sounds which plainly reveal whatever he desires to foretell." ‡ "A prophet is an interpreter, echoing from within the words of God." § This idea, of the prophet's being an unapprehensive organ, — divested, in a state of trance or ecstasy, of intelligent consciousness, — "a mere pipe," as some friends of the scheme have phrased it, "for God to speak through," — has been revived of late by some continental critics, and has especially been brought into notice by a work, recently translated and published in this country, the "Christology" of Hengstenberg. This last writer makes the following statement; "Since the prophets were only organs of the Holy Spirit, we may not inquire, whether, during their ecstasy and the suppression of reason and consciousness, they understood correctly or incorrectly; and they afterwards stood in the same relation to their predictions as their hearers or readers; so that their views of

* "Op." Tom. I. p. 222, edit. Mang.

† Ibid. p. 510.

‡ Ibid. Tom. II. p. 343.

§ Ibid. p. 417.

them cannot be decisive of their true import."* That is ; the writers themselves of the words may have been in error respecting the meaning of the words ; and, when we have ascertained what significance they attached to these, we have made no progress in a Biblical interpreter's proper work.

It is not, I suppose, by any means to be feared, that this theory will gain any footing. It has not only not generally been well received by any class of expositors, but has been formally refuted by some of those, from whom sobriety, in respect to principles of interpretation, was not confidently to be looked for. It rests upon no Scripture evidence ; the two texts appealed to in its behalf (even if both were of clear canonical authority), falling far short of the representation, which they have been imagined to contain.† Besides being embarrassed by all the insuperable difficulties of the theory of verbal inspiration, they suppose an unnecessary and an unproved miracle, in the prophet's being dispossessed of his consciousness, so as to be made a vehicle of divine communications. If the prophet gave a sense to the words which he uttered, then the words, taken as a prophecy in any other sense, can, of themselves, have no value as proof ; because the correspondence between them and the event to which the prophet supposed them to refer, — that very correspondence which led the prophet to his opinion of their sense, — would justify a reader in saying, that such was their sense, and that, accordingly, they had been already fulfilled. And again ; words which the prophet did not himself understand, his readers would understand no better ; and, accordingly, they would have no test in their minds, by which to try the question, whether those

* "Christology," &c. Keith's Translation ; Vol. I. pp. 234, 235.

† 1 Pet. i. 10-12 ; 2 Pet. i. 17-21.

words have been fulfilled. If I am to be satisfied, that a prediction has been accomplished, — that certain events have answered to certain words, — I must first be satisfied, what that prediction, what those words, denote. It is mere reasoning in a circle to say, that the event puts a sense on the words, and then that the words describe the event. Of course, the words will then describe the event; and so they would, if the event were any other event, and the words any other words. But what right has the event to put a sense on the words? The very question at issue is, that of their correspondence together; and, to try this question, there is no other way but to bring and compare them together, as two independent things. Nothing is gained by arbitrarily making a correspondence, and then showing, that the correspondence we have made exists. This would not be a comparison of two things together, but of one thing and its duplicate, which we have fabricated for the purpose. The question, for an interpreter, is not upon a correspondence which he has made, but on an alleged correspondence which he did not make, and of whose existence he is to judge.

Whoever is satisfied, that either of the methods of interpretation, which have been glanced at, presents a good claim to his adoption, will of course carry it into what he may think its proper applications in the examination of the books of the Later Prophets, as well as of others of the Biblical collection. But I apprehend, that, until a much better argument has been made out for them, than as yet we have seen, we must be content to interpret all the books of the Bible alike, on the same leading principle as any other books whatever; assuming, that whenever either God, or men using good faith, — whichever the case may be, — address men in words, they mean to be understood by them, and, accordingly, will employ the medium of communication in precisely

the same manner, in which they, to whom instruction is to be conveyed, are accustomed to employ it. Used in any other way, it would cease to be a medium of communication. Whoever addresses me in language, if he means to be understood by me, will use it in the mode in which I expect to have it used. Otherwise, it would be better that he should be silent, or avail himself of a tongue unknown to me. In either of the latter cases, he would but leave me in ignorance. In the former, he would not fail to seduce me into error.

LECTURE XXXIV.

OBJECT AND CHARACTER OF THE WRITINGS
OF THE LATER PROPHETS.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.—PREVAILING OPINION RESPECTING THE SUPERNATURAL ACQUAINTANCE OF THE LATER PROPHETS WITH FUTURE EVENTS.—ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THIS VIEW, DRAWN FROM LANGUAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.—MIRACULOUS CHARACTER OF THE SUPPOSED PREDICTIONS, AND INCONGRUITY OF THE SUPPOSITION OF A PERMANENT MIRACULOUS DISPENSATION.—THE OFFICE OF THE LATER PROPHETS NOT REQUIRING SUPERNATURAL ENDOWMENTS.—QUESTION RESPECTING THE FACT OF THEIR HAVING WROUGHT MIRACULOUS WORKS.—FORCE OF THE NAME *PROPHET* APPLIED TO THEM.—FORCE OF EXPRESSIONS USED BY THEM RESPECTING THE NATURE OF THEIR AUTHORITY.—SUBJECT OF A GREAT PART OF THEIR WRITINGS, NOT RELATING TO THE FUTURE.—NATURE OF THE NECESSARY PROOF OF SUPERNATURAL PREDICTION.—SUPPOSED SUPERNATURAL PREDICTIONS IN THESE BOOKS, OF THE NATIONAL CAPTIVITY,—AND OF THE MESSIAH.—SUGGESTIONS RESPECTING THE REAL CHARACTER AND OFFICE OF THE PROPHETS.—QUESTION RESPECTING JEWISH OPINIONS UPON THIS SUBJECT AT THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

THE current opinion respecting the character of the books of the Later Prophets may be briefly described as follows:

They embody the knowledge possessed by their writers respecting future events; a knowledge directly and supernaturally communicated by the divine Being to those writers' minds. The predictions contained in them mainly relate to the advent, the character, and the circumstances of the life, of the Messiah, and so accurately describe these particulars, as they were afterwards combined in Jesus, that the correspondence is to be taken as an independent and cogent proof of his

divine mission. But they also relate to events less remote from the time of their publication; and the main object of such predictions was, to establish the faith of those who saw them fulfilled, in the divine authority of the Prophet, and so to cause them to yield credit to what he further foretold concerning the coming of Christ.

If the view, which I have thus described, has a claim to be received at all, that claim must stand upon a sufficient basis of evidence. That there is such sufficient evidence, I have no right to deny, previously to a survey of the books which are supposed to contain it. At present, I can do no more than state the question, and direct attention to the kind and degree of proof upon which the received doctrine must rest, if it is to be sustained, and to some particular inquiries, which, in the course of the examination, it will be necessary to institute, if, in so great a matter, we would proceed with becoming circumspection. And whenever, in the course of the remarks now to be made, I express a positive opinion upon any of the points at issue, I do it only for the sake of avoiding circumlocution, and wish to be understood as submitting its correctness to the test of observations, which will be suggested in the course of a reading of the books.

It is commonly supposed, that the authority of our Lord's Apostles has decided the question before us; that they have affirmed, or (which is the same thing) have used arguments distinctly implying, the truth of the proposition, that events, taking place in their time, circumstantially fulfilled predictions uttered by the Later Prophets, in the use of knowledge of which they had become possessed, by direct, supernatural communication to their own minds. Some expositors, and they much the larger number, maintain, that the fact of such

arguments being used, settles the question at issue. Others, admitting the fact, that the Apostles used such, say, that they used them in an ignorance, under which they labored in common with their countrymen, respecting the true meaning of what they quoted; and urge, that they might thus err, consistently with their Apostolic character. I take neither of these grounds. I deny the existence of the assumed fact. I deny, that an instance can be produced of the use, by an Apostle, of an argument of the kind supposed. I ask for the proof, that they have, in any case, employed language authorizing the inference which has been thus drawn. I believe, that, where, in the places referred to in this argument, they have used, whether for illustration or conviction, language taken from the books before us, they understood and employed it correctly, and that they did not understand or represent it as having the force which the common argument, used in treating this subject, maintains.

The exhibition of the evidence falling within this branch of the inquiry, however, belongs not to the interpretation of the Old Testament, but of the New. It must be referred, accordingly, to another department of Biblical study. But, supposing the case to be, as I have represented it, that the New Testament does not justify the common opinion, still the question is not at an end. The opinion may be correct, though we have not that particular proof of its correctness. If it is correct, and yet not provable from the authority of the New Testament, it must be established by considerations drawn from the books in question, themselves. Again; as long as we hold it for an unsettled question, whether quotations in the New Testament from the Old are to be understood as applied in one or another way, the conclusion, at which we may arrive from an

examination of the Old Testament alone, respecting the original meaning of such quoted passages, will deservedly have great weight in satisfying us concerning the use, which the New Testament writers meant to make of them. Our simple argument will be ; So far as, in the use of our best light, we conclude that those passages had a certain meaning, just so far it is likely, that the Apostles also ascribed to them the same meaning, and that they used them accordingly.

In approaching the inquiry, to which the circumstances of the case so confine us, two preliminary remarks demand to be made, touching the relations of the common opinion on this subject to the theory of miracles. A miracle is a deviation from the established order of nature ; and, because none but God, who established that order, can encroach upon and interfere with it, we recognise, in a miracle, an interposition of God. Now *the order of nature* is just what men see it to be. The phrase has reference to their perceptions, and not to any restrictions upon God's power. He might have established an entirely different order, and then no occurrence corresponding with that would have been a miracle, however opposed to the order which now we observe and experience. But the popular opinion supposes supernatural predictions, which, taking our experience for the standard, are miracles in the strictest sense, to have constantly occurred among the Jews, through a series of generations and centuries. If so, did they not thereby lose, with that people, their miraculous character ? Did they not become a part of, instead of a contradiction to, the extended experience of the Jewish nation ? And when they so became a part of a people's regular experience, what power did they retain to manifest a supernatural, an extraordinary, interposition of God ? Every one will allow, that to

speak of a perpetual miraculous dispensation is to speak of what is incredible, inasmuch as it is self-contradictory. Practically, let any one ask himself, whether the case would be materially different with a miraculous dispensation, supposed, as the Jewish commonly enough is supposed, to have continued through a succession of ages.

Again ; to recur to a view already presented in another place, they who have maintained, that miracles are phenomena capable of being proved by testimony, have wisely argued, that all that is wanted to make a miracle antecedently credible, is, to have it shown that an occasion had arisen worthy of the divine interference in an extraordinary manner. God, they say, can work in one way, as well as in another ; in a way different from what we see to be his common course of action, as well as in a way corresponding with it. In matters concerning men, he works, for the most part, according to uniform, established modes of operation. And his benevolence is our pledge, that, for the most part, he will do so, because this uniformity is the basis of human calculations, on which so much of men's external welfare, and of their spiritual discipline, depends. He will not, for any slight or frequent cause, violate that order. But there is one occasion, on which that same benevolence is equally our pledge, that he will violate it. It is when a great good is to be conferred on men, communicable, from the nature of the case, in no other way. Certainly, he will not restrict himself by any rules, causing him to abandon his power and right to reveal himself in lessons of truth and duty, through a direct message to his children, when the boon is sufficiently precious, and their prospect without it sufficiently dark, to justify such a course. And if he is to reveal himself at all, it is by a disturbance of those laws of nature

which he alone can disturb. The presumption against miracles is then all done away. They are then as capable as other events of being established by testimony.

Such exigences had arisen when Judaism and Christianity were revealed. This is part of the ground which we must occupy, when we undertake to present the miraculous evidence, and prove the divine authority, of those religions. New truths of vast moment, incapable, as far as we can see, under the circumstances, of being otherwise revealed, were then revealed to men; and the result was worthy, if I may so speak, of being obtained at such cost. He, who will maintain a miraculous agency exerted through the Later Prophets, must be prepared to hold a similar argument concerning the objects of their ministry. What new facts of great moment did they communicate, incommunicable except through miraculous instrumentality? What new governing principles did they establish? What system of religious truth or practice were they commissioned thus to introduce? He who means to put the common opinion on tenable ground, must be prepared with an answer to these questions.

Is all this to be set down as an inadmissible *à priori* argument? I conceive, on the contrary, that we have here one of those cases, where, facts being by no means full and clear on the one side, antecedent probabilities are to be allowed great weight on the other. Certainly, I think the remarks which have been made will show, that, if there be supposed difficulties in one view of the subject before us, the other is by no means unincumbered by difficulties of a very serious character.

But let us proceed to the facts in the case. Of what description is the positive proof relied upon in attribut-

ing the supposed supernatural mission to the Later Prophets?

I. Will it be said, that they gave proof of it in miracles which they wrought, independent of their predictions? I put this argument first, because it stands quite apart from the others. Only a single remark upon it would be here in place. If we have satisfactory evidence of their having wrought such miracles, the question of their supernatural commission is at an end; for then with such a commission they were undoubtedly invested. When I say, that I find no such evidence, I do but announce an opinion, which must stand or fall with the view of the character and sense of certain passages, to be submitted when they shall present themselves in their course.

II. The name, by which these writers called themselves, does not prove, that they laid claim to a supernatural knowledge of future events. In theological discussions, it is our habit to use the words *prophesy* and *prophet*, as if always, in Scripture, they were intended to imply such a knowledge; an idea, than which no other could be more unfounded or delusive. Even in our own language, at the time when the Received Version was made, these words had a much broader sense. According to its etymology, to *prophesy* means either to *declare beforehand*, or to *declare publicly*, to *proclaim*, *announce*, *preach*;* and no one can doubt, that our translators used the word in the latter sense, several times, for instance, in the fourteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and in very many other places of the Old and New Testaments.† But it is needless to

* φημί, προφημί, πρόφασις, προφήτης, προφητεύω.

† The word was in common use in this sense, in New England, in the early times. For instance, on the occasion of a visit of Governor Winthrop to Plymouth, it is said, in an account of the religious services

dwell upon this, because a rendering of our translators, right or wrong, would have no weight in determining the character which the original writers intended to claim, in the application to themselves of a Hebrew title. What is to our purpose is the fact, that the name which these writers occasionally apply to themselves, and which furnishes the title of their books in the Hebrew collection, does not necessarily imply any pretension of the kind supposed. The etymology of the word (אָמַר) is traced by means of the kindred Arabic root, which signifies, in its primitive sense, *to bring forth, to produce*, and, in a secondary use, *to announce, or proclaim*; that is, to produce or express thought. This latter, I take to be universally its sense in the Hebrew, in which language, however, the *usus loquendi* limits its application to the expression of thought in some solemn, elaborate, impressive manner.

But however we may speculate concerning the history of the meanings of the word in the Hebrew language, they are themselves made sufficiently plain by the connexions in which they are presented. The solemn, impressive utterance, conveyed in the sense of the verb, was sometimes in the way of a spoken harangue; and, as far as the word is concerned, the subject of such harangue might equally well be commemoration of the past; exhortation, encouragement, or remonstrance, for the present; or promise, or threat, or warning for the future. And sometimes it was in the way of vocal or instrumental music. The subject of a prophet's discourse, in prose or in song, might as well be something relating to the future as any thing else; and, in that case, a coincidence in fact would occur be-

of the Lord's day, that the "Reverend Mr. Williams *prophesied*." — "Winthrop's Journal," Vol. I. p. 92.

tween prophecy and description of the future. But there is no essential equivalence between the terms; and it would be no safer to argue, that, because a prophet might foretell, a prophet meant a foreteller of the future, than to reason, because Amos was a prophet and also a herdsman, that prophet and herdsman meant the same thing.*

* The word, — noun or verb, — denotes the expression of thought with musical intonation, in the following passages. Exod. xv. 20; 1 Sam. x. 10–13 (comp. 5); xix. 20, 21; 1 Chron. xxv. 1–3.

The meaning, in which the words relate to the expression of thought in the manner of formal discourse, — in which to prophesy is to *preach*, and a prophet a *preacher*, whether the subject of his discourse concern the future, the past, or the present, — is common. See Judges vi. 8; Proverbs xxx. 1; xxxi. 1; and comp. Ex. vii. 1, with iv. 16, where the meaning of prophet in the one, and spokesman in the other, is clearly the same. Again, in Numbers xi. 25–29, the office of those who are said to have prophesied, was plainly that of exhorters. The passages which I have cited are the only ones in the first four books of the Old Testament where the word occurs, except two, viz. Numb. xii. 6, where a reference, in the word *prophet*, to instructions concerning the future, can neither be affirmed nor denied; and Gen. xx. 7, to which I shall presently revert. If we come down to the latest historical books, we still find the same general meaning of *exhortation* attaching itself to the word. See Ezra v. 1; vi. 14; Neh. vi. 7. And in 2 Chron. ix. 29, נִבִּיָּא is properly rendered, by the authors of the Septuagint version, by the word λόγος. “He is a prophet,” says a Jewish commentator on Ex. iv. 16, quoted by Koppe (“Nov. Test.” Vol. VI. p. 305), “who teaches and admonishes the people.”

The lexicographers have unnecessarily wandered from the primitive sense in some of their definitions. They give for one of these, *friend of God*, and refer for authority to Gen. xx. 7, and Psalm cv. 15. But the idea intended to be conveyed in the latter text I take to have been, “Do no harm to those who, by their life and doctrine, *preach righteousness*,” as Noah is said to have done (2 Pet. ii. 5); persons, it is true, who were dear to God, but dear to him in this very character of *prophets*, i. e. preachers of righteousness. And I would give this same meaning to the word in Gen. xx. 7, or else understand it thus; He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee; he can *speak* effectually in prayer; and thou shalt have the benefit of his supplications. So when Elisha, by curing Naaman, expected to show, that there was “a *prophet* in Israel” (2 Kings v. 8), I take the idea intended, to have been, that he would give proof, in this way, that God had appointed one to preach, declare, announce his

III. But the prophets, in the execution of their office, occasionally announce themselves as "servants of the Lord," and use other similar expressions.* Do not such expressions prove, that they assumed a supernatural, divine commission to speak? He who will argue, that the words have this force, must be prepared to show, that no other meaning can naturally and easily be put upon them; or else, that there is something in the circumstances of the context limiting them to this signification, in which latter case, however, his argument will no longer rest on the necessary import of the language. The former ground cannot be maintained; for, clearly, a preacher in our own day, when less bold forms of speech are in favor, would not be thought to speak assumingly, if he told his audience, that he addressed them as the Lord's minister. He is justified in using such phraseology, if he feels that he has a message from the Lord to enforce, wheth-

truth. He could actually be a prophet, a preacher, in Israel, without any thing of the kind; but the working of the cure was, in this instance, to give authority to his word, when he made himself known in that character.

Again; in 1 Samuel xviii. 10, the verb is translated by the lexicographers as simply meaning *to be mad*, a secondary sense, which has no well-traced connexion with the primitive. It would be more properly rendered *to rave*, which, to be sure, is the effect of madness, but not madness itself;—*to rave*, that is, (for the word in that connexion is found in the reflexive conjugation *Hithpahel*), *to make one's self a ranter*, to play the *spouter*, to act the speaker, to personate the prophet. The word in 1 Kings xviii. 29, should be understood in a similar manner. It is there an ironical description, significant of the writer's contempt for the noisy and frantic deportment of the priests of Baal.

According to prevailing grammatical analogy, the verb, to have the sense, which is ascribed to it both in these remarks and in the lexicons, should be in the active conjugation *Kal* (where it is never found), instead of *Niphal*. But *Niphal* has sometimes a mere neuter sense, often a reflexive, and, in some instances, even an active, one. (Gesenius, "Hebräische Grammatik," § 50, 135.) And the question is of less importance, as the contexts are sufficiently clear to leave no doubt respecting the actual acceptance of the term.

* E. g. Jer. vii. 25; xxv. 4; xxvi. 5; Ezek. xxxviii. 17; Zech. i. 6.

er he have himself come into possession of the substance of that message by natural or supernatural means. Preachers tell their hearers, that they are "ambassadors" to them "for Christ," — language, probably never misunderstood, as implying a claim to a supernatural commission. Whether the context, in any case, puts on the phrase in question the limited sense assumed, is an inquiry which can only be pursued in connexion with particular passages. — Again; when the Later Prophets use such language, as, "The Lord said unto us, 'Do this or that,' " — or "The Lord said," preceding a discourse, do these forms of speech involve an assertion of express divine revelation? He who affirms that they do, must needs understand, that God is declared to have made such revelations to Shimei,* the reviler of David, to Rabshakeh,† the Assyrian invader, and even to irrational beings. ‡

IV. But, it will be urged, these writers have, in fact, left on record their predictions of future occurrences, detailed with an accuracy beyond the reach of mere human foresight, and circumstantially fulfilled by the event. With relation to this statement three remarks are to be made.

1. It is certain, that their writings are not to be held as being merely predictions, either by virtue of the name of *prophecies* which they bear, or on any other ground; inasmuch as, in point of fact, very much of the matter, of which they consist, is not prediction in any sense, nor on any interpretation, nor has any relation to the future. It commemorates historical events, and discusses rules and occasions of present conduct. The prophecies make use, in short, of all the various topics of exhortation, suitable to exigencies of private duty or of

* 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

† 2 Kings xviii. 25.

‡ Ezek. xxxix. 17.

public affairs, and do not merely treat of coming prosperity or disaster, whether naturally anticipated, or supernaturally made known.*

2. It is plain that we reason altogether illogically, if, reading what we think was intended for a supernatural prediction, we assume, without historical evidence, that it was fulfilled as such, and go on, from a comparison of such prediction with its supposed fulfilment, to infer, that he who delivered the former was supernaturally endowed. Without question, in order to prove the existence of supernatural foresight, we must be able to show three things ; 1. that the prediction was uttered before the event occurred ; 2. that the event actually did occur as described ; and 3. that the correspondence between prediction and event was so circumstantial and complete, as is not to be explained on the supposition of the former having been the fruit of merely human sagacity. In reading these books, we shall have occasion, unless I greatly err, to remark repeated instances of supposed supernatural prediction, where the second of these particulars cannot be shown from any historical notices ; and, of course, where the third cannot, depending, as it does, on a comparison between the second and the first. In others, the third point may appear to us not well made out ; and it may be, that, in others still, satisfactory proof, even of the first particular, will appear to be wanting, and that we shall

* So Jahn in his "Introd. in Libros Sacros, V. T.;" "The writings of the prophets, which are yet extant, are by no means confined to predictions. They contain very many passages which relate to other subjects, such as the nature and attributes of God ; the religious and moral duties of man ; reproofs of idolatry, and other vices ; exhortations to the practice of religion and virtue ; and advice and warnings respecting the political condition of the country, and the administration of its affairs."—*Pars II. § 83.*

find reason to allow, that it was not prediction that the writer intended, but history.

3. But, thirdly, it may be, that we shall have to go further yet, and to admit, in cases where there are sufficient historical *data* extant to sustain the comparison, that supernatural prediction is not to be supposed, because the prediction, if it were such, is refuted by the history. On the common principles of interpretation of the prophets, it may be thought, that no part of these writings more distinctly demands to be regarded as supernatural prediction, than the last nine chapters of Ezekiel. Yet who will undertake to maintain, on any historical grounds, that the twelve Jewish tribes ever returned, and made a new partition of the country, and built a temple, and instituted again their polity and worship, after the manner which he describes? Nothing, so remote in time, is more notorious than the opposite facts. Nor, as to what is there described in such minute detail, can we, with any more plausibility, maintain, that it is to come, than that it is passed. For nothing is more unquestionable, than that ten of the twelve tribes, whose settlements are there described, lost their individuality many ages ago, and became inextricably merged in the mass of the nations.*

But, it will be said, that, allowing all due force to these remarks, the fact still remains, that there are predictions in these writings, of the subsequent accomplishment of

* Yet the Rabbins, and some Christian writers, have undertaken to delineate the second temple after Ezekiel's description, assuming, that it was supernatural description, and therefore necessarily fulfilled agreeably to its terms. I do not know, that any writer has been so hardy as to assert a past fulfilment of Ezekiel's language respecting a new division of the Jewish territory after the people's return from Babylon; but his language demands such an interpretation as much, or as little, in the one case as in the other.

which we are assured by history; and that this fact, whatever others may exist of a different description, unquestionably proves supernatural knowledge on the part of their authors. I admit, that it does prove such knowledge, provided the three facts, above specified, are first made out; 1. that the prediction preceded the event,—a proposition, the denial of which, in any case, by no means implies a charge of bad faith on the part of a writer, but only of unskilfulness on the part of his interpreters; 2. that the event predicted, occurred,—a fact, which must appear, if at all, on historical testimony; and 3. that its correspondence with the prediction was such as to preclude the idea, that natural human sagacity foretold what befell,—a conclusion which calls for the exercise of a sound judgment, comparing the prediction and its fulfilment together.

The instances which would be selected as most prominent and material, on which to try this question, would of course be, first and above all, the predictions relating to the coming Messiah, and, secondly, those relating to the captivity of the Jewish nation. In regard to the latter, a critic is bound to inquire, whether it was foretold in such a manner, at such times, under such circumstances, as to preclude other suppositions, except that of a direct supernatural illumination imparted to the prophet. Was it announced, in each given case, as a prediction; or was it held up as a threat, as any political monitor might present it? Was it a menace, uttered to a sinful nation, through knowledge miraculously obtained by the author, respecting the disastrous fortunes which impended; or was it, in any given case, but the expression of current views respecting the punishment which national apostasy would incur,—views which any other person, who believed the nation to be guilty, would have been as much prepared to entertain

and express? Was it, in any instance under consideration, only the writer's application of principles, well established and well known to Jews, to a state of national character and relations to which they might be justly applied? Was it but repetition and amplification of language actually found in the law of Moses? * for, if so, there needed no supernatural endowment to repeat Moses' language in a later age.† Were definite predictions of important political changes uttered at so distant a preceding time, or were they so definite and circumstantial, that visible political tendencies, as they would be perceived, and estimated, and calculated upon by a wise man, will not sufficiently account for all the degree of definiteness, and extent of detail, which in such cases appears?

All these are questions which must be satisfactorily settled on one side, before a foundation is prepared for the commonly received opinion to stand upon. And they are questions, in settling which we must not give our imagination the reins. Where there is an amplitude and richness of poetical embellishment, some expressions cannot fail to occur amidst the mass, which will exhibit a striking correspondence with single events, which, in their turn, we have selected from a series and mass of events to bring into favorable comparison with them. Things are constantly said and written, and that of the future, by uninspired men, without any definite image or purpose in their minds, with which

* As, e. g. in Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii.

† From Daniel ix. 13, it appears, that the later Jews, in contemplating national calamities, referred them to the principles laid down in Moses' Law. If they did this when they witnessed those calamities already befallen, there is quite as much reason to suppose, they did it when they saw them impending, and that the language in which they spoke of them would accordingly be, as much of it appears in fact to have been, drawn from that source.

something, that may be selected from the occurrences of after time, presents a curious coincidence. If Virgil's fourth Eclogue had been bound up with the Bible, what a remarkable prophecy of the Messiah would it have been esteemed! When the father of our country first obtained some little distinction in his youth, a then eminent clergyman printed a discourse, in which he expressed the "hope, that Providence had preserved him in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."* These were his words. The event fulfilled that hope, and caused its early expression to be a subject of remark, but did not acquire for its author the reputation, to which he had never aspired, of a supernatural acquaintance with the future. I need not multiply such illustrations. Every one knows, that they might be collected to an indefinite extent.

With respect, moreover, to predictions of a great prince to arise from the midst of the Jewish nation, the inquiry will demand a critic's careful consideration, whether these writers have described Jesus as he actually appeared, with that particularity and exactness which shows, that they were supernaturally acquainted with the nature of his office (which was that of a spiritual deliverer), and with the events of his (to them) future ministry; or whether, as often as they spoke of the distinguished personage looked for by their nation, they did but express the views concerning him then current in their nation, and continuing to be so, down to our Saviour's own times. No Jew, at least in the later ages of the independent history of the nation, doubted, that his nation and its religion were to outlive present ill-fortune, and be permanent institutions; and if permanent, how else could this be supposed to be,

* Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. II. p. 90.

except under the permanent rule of the line of princes which had possessed itself of the throne? The primeval patriarchs of the race had been told, as we learn from the traditions preserved by Moses, that in their seed *all the nations of the earth should be blessed*; and Moses himself had acquainted the people, that, in due time, *a prophet would the Lord their God raise up unto them of their brethren, like unto him.*

How these promises were interpreted, or whether they were objects of any attention, during the period between Moses and the kings, we have no means of knowing. They are not referred to in the records of that time. But when David came to sit upon the throne of Israel, and saw the fate of the people apparently in his hands, and in the hands of those who should follow him, it was altogether natural (was it not, humanly speaking, unavoidable?), that he should identify the great personage who was looked for, the descendant of Abraham, in whom all nations were to be blessed, with one of those who should succeed him in the regal office. If any Jew was to bless all nations, who could he be, — would be the natural inquiry, — but the king of the Jews? On this basis, accordingly, I think David has proceeded in some of his Psalms, referring to his greater successor, who was to extend his conquests over the nations, and thus impart to them the blessings of a righteous rule and a pure religious faith. The views, received on the subject in the time of David, would naturally go down to the times of his descendants; and, unless the writings of the Later Prophets can be shown to make an exception to the remark, we have no ground for supposing, that any views of him who was looked for, more consonant, than what have been described, to the real character and office of Jesus, were ever held among the Jews, from the time

of David to the time when Jesus actually appeared, and when we know full well, that the thoughts of his countrymen were directed to no other than a temporal prince.

The question then, for an interpreter, is, whether the Later Prophets, guided by supernatural instruction, have described him, who was to come, as Jesus actually came, or whether, following the current notions of their nation on the subject, they described him as Jesus did not come. And we are to answer this question agreeably to the best insight we are able to attain into the meaning of the language they have used. In doing this, we must inquire, whether the copious ascribing of the attributes of temporal dominion to one who was, however, in truth, understood to be merely a spiritual deliverer and leader, may not be sufficiently accounted for, as has been commonly thought, by the peculiarities of Oriental poetry. But we shall have further to consider, whether, besides presenting the supposed shadow often, these writers have ever distinctly presented the substance ; whether they have once described Jesus as he has revealed himself to us, in such a manner as to indicate, that substantially they knew him, as we know him. Where a religious reformation is spoken of, as one of the fruits of the expected reign, is it any thing more, in some cases, than the extension of the Jewish faith to conquered tribes, in consequence of the victories of the Jewish arms ; and, in others, is it any thing more, or is it so much, as, without supernatural illumination to the writer, might be gathered by fair inference from that passage in Deuteronomy, where the person predicted is spoken of by Moses, not as a prince and soldier, but as a prophet, a teacher ?

But what were the Later Prophets, if they were not the supernaturally inspired men they have been taken

to be? Should we be led to entertain that question, it will deserve our inquiry, whether something like the following statement, concerning them, is not a correct one.

Generally, — and I make the qualification with reference to the book of Jonah, — they were wise, brave, and patriotic men, who, animated by the spirit of their law, and of its author, were reprovers of the princes, and monitors of the people; men “full of power,” as one of them says of himself,* “by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” Without pretending to direct supernatural aid, they were, in their respective times, preachers of righteousness, as the miraculously revealed law of Moses had acquainted them with its principles. They rebuked, threatened, approved, encouraged, warned, consoled, according as different exigencies of the state, or different habits or sentiments gaining ground among the people, called for their interposition. The Law, — the divinely imparted oracle of the nation, — had explicitly and largely told them, that national disaster would be the consequence of national wickedness, and public prosperity the reward of obedience; and each of these truths successively, or both of them together, as occasion required, they repeated and enforced for the people’s conviction. And when they saw, that the people had been guilty, and saw also, that, at the time being, they were in danger from some particular power, — the Assyrian, the Chaldean, or the Egyptian, — then they pointed to that power as being the instrument by which, judging from the signs of the times, the menaces of the Law, denouncing overthrow and captivity to an unbelieving race, were to receive their accomplishment.

* Micah iii. 8.

But they did not believe, that God would wholly and finally cast off his people. Patriotism, national pride, the character of their institutions (apparently, in their view, framed for permanency), the improbability, that the only race on earth, which did homage to the one true God, would be permitted, through defeat and dispersion, to discontinue that homage, all forbade the thought. Also ; if the nation was to be saved by remonstrance and entreaty, it was to be, not merely by denunciations of God's vengeance on their wickedness, but by animating in their breasts the hope of future glorious days. And if it was to be expected, that God would take care of his people ; if, notwithstanding its wickedness and misfortunes, the Jewish race was to survive and be renewed, how was this consummation to be brought about ? What other view of the method could possibly occur, than that it should be under the conduct of a leader, able to recover and sustain the Jewish independence and greatness ? He who believed, that Judaism was not to be suffered to become extinct, would,—necessarily, one may say,—believe, that an able, wise, and religious king was to resuscitate it.

Such a personage, according to the view which I am suggesting, the Later Prophets actually spoke of. Such a champion was the only one, whom,—apart from supernatural instruction conveyed to them on the subject,—they can be supposed to have looked for ; and such an one their language, as we have it, may be thought to describe. Sometimes, in their anger against their persecutors, they depict him, as in the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah, in the infliction of a bloody vengeance on the foes of Israel. But, for the most part, they invest him with venerable attributes, as a mighty but beneficent ruler, extending over his own people a peaceful sway, and, by the spread of his dominions, commu-

nicating the blessings of his righteous and parental rule to others, and bringing them, too, to a participation in the benefits of the true and divinely revealed faith of Moses.*

But, if the Later Prophets so far misunderstood the character of the great personage, whose advent, guided partly by reasons of the case, and especially by declarations of Moses, they anticipated, with what propriety, it will be asked, could Jesus be identified, by himself and his apostles, with the deliverer whom they had described? How could it be said, that the spiritual Saviour of the world was he of whom these prophets had spoken? I can best answer the question, by suggesting the analogy of a case, in respect to which, probably, all Christians are agreed. At the time when Jesus appeared, the Jews, — with particular reference to certain expressions in the book of Daniel,† — were in the habit of speaking of the dispensation, for which they looked, under the name of *the kingdom of heaven*. The ideas, which they associated with this expression,

* The origin of the idea, that that illustrious benefactor of the Jewish nation and of the world, pointed at in various passages of the Pentateuch, was to sustain the regal character, — while it is so easily accounted for upon the general grounds of the case, — might be also explained as the result of a comparison of certain texts in the same books. Under the impulses, which have been above described, it is natural to suppose, that the particular character of *prophet* or *teacher*, ascribed by Moses to him whom he foretold (Deut. xviii. 15), would be lost sight of, and that rather, in connexion with Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14, attention should be given to xvii. 6, 16; xxxv. 11, which speak of a royal issue from the Jewish stock. These passages, viewed together, would be very likely to be taken for a comment on that in Deuteronomy. — In 1 Maccabees xiv. 41 *et seq.* I think we have an interesting hint of this identification, by the Jews, of a political head of the nation with the *prophet*, spoken of by Moses. Simon was to be “governor” and “captain,” and be “over the armour, and over the fortresses,” and “be clothed in purple, and wear gold,” “until there should arise a [or, the] faithful prophet.”

† Daniel ii. 44; vii. 13, 14.

were exceedingly erroneous. They expected a new Jewish empire to be established on a more stable and glorious footing than the old. It was to be established and administered under heavenly protection by the Son of David, the Messiah. He was to be a valiant, politic, and magnificent prince, successful in his wars, and exalting his subjects to a temporal supremacy over the nations.

The humble Jesus of Nazareth was no such prince; his office was to establish no such dominion; his was to be not a worldly, but a spiritual sway; yet, because he came to set up a kingdom, a kingdom under heavenly protection, the only kingdom which was to be looked for, and the very authority which had been pointed at by Moses in words which later ages had misunderstood, he did not hesitate to begin his ministry with the declaration, "*The kingdom of heaven is at hand,*" and to repeat the same and similar language through its whole course. The kingdom of heaven was at hand, though in a sense different from what had been understood, and in one which it remained for him to explain. In like manner he was *the Messiah* of whom the prophets had spoken. If they had spoken of him erroneously, still it was of the illustrious individual, in whom, the patriarchs had been told, *all nations of the earth should be blessed*, — of the *prophet like unto himself*, whom Moses had foretold, — that they had intended to speak. Him, and no other, they had in their thoughts, however imperfectly or incorrectly they apprehended him; and that person, and no other, Jesus was. As in the former case, relating to his institution, so in the latter, relating to himself, there was a perfect propriety in the language, in which he asserted, that what God had been expected to send, was at length sent, though, in both cases, the expectations

which had been entertained needed to be rectified. A coming "kingdom of heaven" had been anciently spoken of, as succeeding to the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman monarchies. The real kingdom of heaven, founded by Jesus, was no such government; but a kingdom, and a heavenly kingdom, it was; and, accordingly, he did not hesitate to announce it under the name, by which,—involving whatever mixture of error to be afterwards removed,—it was known. So the Later Prophets spoke of a great personage to come under a divine patronage; and, among his other offices, they described him as destined to extend the knowledge of God, and advance the well-being of man; and so far they were right. Their imaginations had wrongly depicted him as accomplishing these objects by the arts of war and polity; but this circumstance by no means precluded the propriety of our Lord's declaring himself to be the person, whom, however mistaken in their description, they had, in good faith, intended to describe.

V. Once more; will it be said, that no such views as these, concerning the interpretation of the Later Prophets, prevailed among the Jews of our Saviour's time, but, on the contrary, the same opinion respecting the supernatural mission of those writers, which has been so extensively adopted by Christians? It may be replied, that, if this were so, no important inference touching our main question is thence deducible. The Jews of our Saviour's time were miserable interpreters of their national records, and are repeatedly reprov'd as such by him and his disciples. Nothing could be a more natural dictate of their national pride,—then exasperated by their national depression,—than to assume, that a supernatural direction had been granted to them through a protracted period of their history; and

nothing could fall in more with the course which their imaginations took under the existing circumstances, than the notion, that, for their hope of just such a conquering deliverer as the Later Prophets had described, they had the authority of God's word directly communicated to those writers.

But again; it may be answered, that such a remark concerning the prevalence, among the Jews, of the opinion, that the Later Prophets had been inspired to predict their Messiah, covers much more ground, than can actually be defended for it. The Jews of our Lord's time were divided into four sects. We have good evidence, which I formerly adduced in another connexion,* that the Sadducees (and the same is probably true concerning the Karaites) either rejected the later books altogether, as some have maintained, or, — a statement which I think is more conformable to the truth, — did not hold them to be sacred books, in any sense in which they ascribed sacredness to the Law. Among the Pharisees alone have we any proof, that the now current opinion prevailed. Nor, among them, can we by any means show, that it was universal. On the contrary, Josephus, himself a Pharisee, uses language concerning the expectations of his countrymen, which he could scarcely have used, had he himself entertained that belief. "The chief motive," says he, "to the unfortunate war with the Romans, was an ambiguous oracle in the Scriptures, importing, that in those days there should one come out of Judea, that should have the command of the whole world, which prophecy they applied to one of their own nation, and many wise men were deceived with the interpretation, though it was intended of Vespasian, who

* See p. 139.

was created emperor in Judea." * Now, whatever *ambiguous oracle* Josephus may here have intended, the passage is hardly to be reconciled with a belief, that he ascribed supernatural knowledge to the Later Prophets; since nothing can be more express than their designation of him who was to come, as a prince from the Jewish stock, which Vespasian was not.

Once more; that this view of the writings before us was held, in our Saviour's time, by any Jews whatever, except the portion of them who lived in Palestine, can by no means be made to appear. On the contrary, Philo, of Alexandria, the copious Jewish writer, contemporary with Jesus, in his ample comments on the Law, scarcely once makes any use of these books, nor does he so much as distinctly mention the Messiah, the authorized annunciation of whom is supposed to make their great theme.† The Jews of Palestine, living in a state of political depression on their ancient territory, and by their ancient temple, cherished in themselves, and stimulated in each other, the hope of a political deliverance; and, in the indulgence of this feeling, may have attributed to the writings before us (which, in speaking of a future time of Jewish prosperity and glory, fell in with their habits of thought) a kind of authority which the writers themselves never claimed. But that the writers made the claim to supernatural knowledge, or that even uniform Jewish tradition ascribed it to them, is a statement, which, to be reasonably received, may be thought to require further evidence than has yet been adduced.

* "De Bello Judaico," Lib. VI. cap. 5., ed. Hudson, p. 1283.

† Bishop Chandler undertakes to show the contrary. "Defence of Christianity," Chap. I. Sect. I. *ad calc.* But his argument is altogether inconclusive.

LECTURE XXXV.

THE BOOK OF AMOS.

TIME OF THE PROPHET AMOS. — A NATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH, BUT AN INHABITANT OF THAT OF ISRAEL. — OBJECT AND CONTENTS OF HIS PROPHECY. — SENSE OF HIS REPRESENTATION OF JEHOVAH'S SPEAKING. — QUESTION WHETHER HE POSSESSED SUPERNATURAL KNOWLEDGE RESPECTING THE FUTURE FORTUNES OF HIS NATION. — EXPLANATION OF HIS LANGUAGE OF EXPOSTULATION AND MENACE. — EXPLANATION OF HIS LANGUAGE RESPECTING THE DOOM OF OTHER NATIONS, — RESPECTING AN IMPENDING CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL, — AND RESPECTING THE PLACE TO WHICH ITS INHABITANTS WOULD BE EXILED. — EXAMINATION OF HIS LANGUAGE RESPECTING THE EXPECTED MESSIAH. — INSTANCES OF WANT OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN HIS ALLEGED PREDICTIONS AND THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY. — EXPLANATION OF HIS LANGUAGE RESPECTING VISIONS OF JEHOVAH. — INSTANCES OF THIS MODE OF EXHIBITION IN MODERN WRITINGS. — CHARACTER OF THE STYLE OF AMOS. — EXPLANATION OF SOME DETACHED PASSAGES.

By the Jews the writings of the Later Prophets were reckoned as four books, of which the works of the twelve Minor Prophets made one. The four together were called by them the *Four Later Prophets*,* the twelve writers of the smaller books, and not merely the books themselves, being thus spoken of as one. The arrangement of the several books, in the collection, has no reference to chronological order, nor do the Minor Prophets occupy the place, relatively to one another, to which such an order would assign them.

The earliest writings in the collection, which we can

* אֲרֻבַּת סְפָרִים. See Rosenmüller's "Scholia in V. T." Vol. VII. p. 4; De Wette's "Einleitung," &c. § 225.

date with accuracy, are those of Amos and Hosea, both of whom are said, in the inscriptions to their books, to have lived in the time of Jeroboam, the second of that name "son of Joash, king of Israel." At the end of a century and a half from the secession of the northern tribes, and the institution by them of a separate government, that prince ascended the throne of Israel, and, in a series of successful military enterprises through a reign of forty years, reinstated, for a time, the decayed fortunes of the nation. The compendious history of his reign is thus given in the Second Book of Kings.*

"In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam, the son of Joash king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, a son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher. For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter; for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And the Lord said not, that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel."

* xiv. 23 - 29.

Amos and Hosea addressed themselves chiefly to his kingdom; and they are the only prophets of whom this is to be said, — the rest, excepting Nahum and Jonah, who had no message to either nation, finding either their whole, or their chief, subject in the affairs of the kingdom of Judah.

According to the inscription, which there appears no reason to distrust, the birth-place of Amos was the village of Tekoa, twelve miles south of Jerusalem; and his occupation was that of a shepherd. At what time he migrated to the northern kingdom, we are not informed; but actually, — at least when he addressed it with some of his remonstrances, — he appears to have been an inhabitant of Bethel, one of the places of its worship.* And that his ministry there was prosecuted after the year 798 B. C., when Uzziah and Jeroboam began to reign contemporaneously over the two kingdoms, is argued from the terms of the inscription. The mention of “the earthquake,” in the same verse, affords no useful note of time. An earthquake in Uzziah’s reign, very probably the same, is also mentioned by Zechariah,† but in no way which enables us to fix its date; and the Rabbinical notion, that it took place to punish the offence of that monarch, recorded in the Second Book of Chronicles, ‡ has no foundation in history.

I regard the book of Amos as exemplifying, in all essential parts, the true idea of the nature of the writings of the Later Prophets. I find in it no evidence of miraculous foreknowledge having been possessed by its author, or of his having made pretensions to that endowment. He is a holy, patriotic man, disgusted with seeing how his religion is neglected and profaned among those, whom, though now living under a differ-

* Amos vii. 13.

† Zech. xiv. 5.

‡ 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, *et seq.*

ent government from that of his own nativity, he cannot forget to call his brethren, and how they are rioting in those national and private sins, — but too incident to a prosperous condition, — which cannot fail to bring in their train a speedy national ruin. He expostulates with them in strong language of condemnation and invective, such as was due to their offence; but lest, at the same time, as a native of Judah, he should seem to be influenced by party zeal, he prefaces his reproofs of Israel with like addresses to other neighbouring nations, whose sins had deserved a like fate, omitting not even his own country, Judah. Through the first six chapters, he puts his remonstrances and threats into the mouth of Jehovah himself, whom he represents as roaring from Zion,* his chosen home, with a voice which sounds through the borders of the northern tribes, and withers the top of their distant Mount Carmel; while, in the last four, adopting another natural and impressive resource of the art of poetical composition, he describes visionary objects emblematic of the destruction, which before, in simpler language, he had been menacing.

At the beginning of this prophecy † we have an expression, “Thus saith Jehovah,” which is commonly thought to intimate, that the prophet lays claim to a su-

* Amos i. 2.

† i. 3. — Dr. Noyes translates the words in the inscription, *דְּבַר אִיָּהוָה אֲשֶׁר נִאֶמַר בְּיָמָיו*, “The words of Amos, which he prophesied.” But I am not satisfied, that the word *נִאֶמַר* will bear this meaning, though some of the commentators give it, in consequence, I think, of a supposed necessity of the case. I would render *אֲשֶׁר* *that which*, or *what*, as in Numbers xxii. 6, and in various other places, (comp. Stuart’s “Hebrew Grammar,” § 478,) and translate; “The words of Amos, what he saw”; that is, relating to what he saw. The word *see* is used, as we use it when we say, “I see evil coming”; meaning, I anticipate, I forebode it.

pernatural communication from him. The context, in this instance, throws a clear light on the meaning of the phrase, showing that it authorizes no such inference. We are told in the preceding verse *how* Jehovah speaks in the present instance.

“ Jehovah roareth from Zion,
And uttereth his voice from Jerusalem;
The habitations of the shepherds mourn,
And the top of Carmel withereth.
Thus saith Jehovah;
‘ For three transgressions of Damascus,’ ” &c.

If the statement of Jehovah’s having spoken is to be taken, in this instance, for a literal matter of fact, so is also, of course, the manner of his speaking; viz. that he spoke with an audible voice from Jerusalem, carrying consternation into the habitations of distant shepherds. But no reader probably supposes the prophet to have intended to declare, that Jehovah actually did so speak. Every one involuntarily interprets the passage as framed upon well known principles of the poetical art, and understands the writer, in the use of a figurative representation, as putting into the mouth of God the expression of designs, — and, if I may so say, sentiments, — which, from God’s justice and holiness, it might be inferred, that he entertained. But if, in this instance, the adjuncts clearly show, that a literal, direct revelation of his purposes by God is not to be imagined, equally clear is it, that, in other cases, where the same expression is employed, no argument, of the kind sometimes proposed, can safely be built upon it.

In Amos we find passages of both the kinds which are the most urged in reference to the supposed miraculous foreknowledge of the Later Prophets; viz. such as threaten national calamities, and such as point to the future glories of the Messiah’s kingdom. If Amos, in

fact, possessed a knowledge, supernaturally imparted, concerning these events, we are to learn it from the book before us.

Do we, then, find language of his, in the first place, which, compared with national calamities of later occurrence, therein described, shows, that he was supernaturally instructed concerning them ?

The mere fact, that he denounces divine judgments against guilty nations, certainly will not prove, that he had a miraculous acquaintance with the destiny which awaited them. Where is the writer, either in poetry or prose, who, in remonstrating with a nation for its vices, does not threaten it with the ruin which the indulgence of those vices will be sure to bring ? It is the safe, the proper, the pertinent, the impressive, the universal argument. That it is righteousness only which will exalt a nation, and that sin will be the destruction, as well as the reproach, of any people, are the two political axioms the most familiar to wise and good men. The practical application of them is often stated conditionally ; and, in fact, the writer before us, in stating it thus himself, has implied a renunciation of any pretension to supernatural knowledge of what the event would be. After denouncing judgments against Israel, in the strongest and most positive terms, he continues thus, in the fifth chapter.

- “ 4 For thus saith Jehovah to the house of Israel,
 ‘ Seek ye me, and ye shall live ;
 5 Seek not Bethel
 And go not to Gilgal,
 And pass not over to Beersheba ;
 For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,
 And Bethel shall come to nought.
 6 Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live,
 Lest he rush, like a fire, on the house of Joseph,
 And it devour, and there be none to quench it in the house of
 Israel.’ ”

Very often, it is true, no such condition is expressed, either because the writer conceives that it will be understood as implied, or because the prevailing corruption is already so great, and its ruinous consequences so apparent and so ripe, and the means, by which the deserved catastrophe is to be brought about, are so obvious and ready, that there is a moral certainty that it will befall. But whether the naming of means of escape from threatened national disasters is suppressed for these reasons or for none that we can assign, we do not commonly think, even after the disasters have befallen, of attributing a supernatural character to him who had threatened them on such grounds. They were foretold in the exercise of a sagacity which is not uncommon, or they were threatened in the natural utterance of patriotic apprehensions; and, when they came to pass, they did so agreeably to the usual experience of national fortunes. Let me give a familiar illustration from a work of our own times, which I select, because in it this theme is treated in the forms of the language which we best understand, and in relation to the country, with whose condition, next to that of our own, we are most familiarly acquainted. The following lines occur in a poem by a contemporaneous author;

— "Think'st thou, Britain, still to sit at ease,
An island queen amidst thy subject seas,
While the vext billows, in their distant roar,
But soothe thy slumbers, and but kiss thy shore?
To sport in wars, while danger keeps aloof,
Thy grassy turf unbruised by hostile hoof?
So sing thy flatterers; — but, Britain, know,
Thou, who hast shared the guilt, must share the woe.

* * * * *

Where wanders Fancy down the lapse of years,
Shedding o'er imaged woes untimely tears?
Perhaps, she says, long ages past away,
And set in western waves our closing day,

Night, Gothic night, again may shade the plains,
 Where Power is seated, and where Science reigns ;
 England, the seat of arts, be only known
 By the gray ruin, and the mouldering stone ;
 That time may tear the garland from her brow,
 And Europe sit in dust, as Asia now.

* * * *

Pensive and thoughtful shall the wanderers greet
 Each splendid square, and still, untrodden street ;
 Or of some crumbling turret, mined by time,
 The broken stairs with perilous step shall climb,
 Thence stretch their view the wide horizon round,
 By scattered hamlets trace its ancient bound,
 And, choked no more with fleets, fair Thames survey
 Through reeds and sedge pursue his idle way.

* * * *

For fairest flowers expand but to decay ;
 The worm is in thy core ; thy glories pass away.
 Arts, arms, and wealth, destroy the fruits they bring ;
 Commerce, like beauty, knows no second spring ;
 Crime walks thy streets, Fraud earns her unblest bread,
 O'er want and woe thy gorgeous robe is spread,
 And angel charities in vain oppose ;
 With grandeur's growth the mass of misery grows ;" &c.*

In reading these lines, does any reasonable person for a moment suppose, that the writer, in predicting the ruin of England as the retribution of its alleged sins, intended to lay claim to prophetic inspiration ? And when, in the ceaseless revolutions of empires, that great nation shall meet its doom, should the work I have mentioned survive, is it likely, that some commentator,

* Barbauld's "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven." The style of representation is not even too bold for modern prose. A strain, very much like that of the Hebrew prophets, occurs, for instance, in Bossuet's Funeral Oration upon Maria Theresa. "Thou, Algiers, rich as thou art in the spoils of Christendom, shalt yield, or fall beneath the conquering arms of Louis. Thou saidst, in thine avaricious heart ; 'I hold the sea under my laws, and the nations are my spoil.' But thou shalt see thyself attacked within thy walls, like a robber bird, which is chased to its rocks, and its nest, where it is distributing its booty to its little ones," &c. "Oraisons Funèbres," &c., Vol. V. p. 181.—To a commentator, disposed to deal with this passage in the style of criticism which has been employed upon the Later Prophets, what an advantage would be afforded by the French conquest of Algiers in our own day.

as injudicious as those who have expounded the patriot poets of the Hebrews, will argue, from its vehement language, to the same effect?

In respect to the six neighbouring nations, the language of Amos is such, as, on the grounds to which I have adverted, might be expected from an enlightened Jew, indignant at the crimes which he expressly charges upon each of them.* In respect to Israel and Judah, he was further able to build upon denunciations of Moses, the inspired teacher of his race,† seeing, as he did, that the conditions, on which Moses had declared those judgments to be suspended, had actually taken place.

If it be said, that Amos speaks not of national disaster in general terms, but of particular forms of it, I answer, that those forms were, in those ages, the established concomitants of national overthrow. If a kingdom fell, its cities were sacked and burnt; its territory was ravaged, and its inhabitants carried away into slavery. Such was the custom of war; and to say that these would occur, was to say no more, than that a weak people would be conquered. The couplet,

" I will send a fire upon Judah,
Which shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem," †

is referred to by Jahn, § in proof of Amos' supernatural foreknowledge of an event two hundred years distant. But that such was the common lot of the vanquished, appears from the fact, that the same writer has applied the self-same words to each one of the nations which he had previously mentioned. The denunciation of captivity against the Jews, when their fall should come, is also commonly cited in evidence of the supernatural foreknowledge of the Later Prophets who have ut-

* Amos i. 3—ii. 3.

† Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xxvii.

‡ Amos ii. 5.

§ "Introduct. in Lib. Sac. V. T." Pars 2, § 91.

tered it. But, besides that they had this on the express authority of Moses, captivity, which does not happen to be here a subject of the threat against Judah or Israel, is seen in the very passage before us to have been a customary consequence of unsuccessful war, being not only denounced against Damascus* and Ammon,† but mentioned as having been previously visited upon their respective enemies by Gaza ‡ and by Tyre.§

Is it said, again, that supernatural knowledge is implied in a designation, corresponding with the truth of subsequent history, of the nation through whose instrumentality a threatened judgment should befall? The argument has less plausibility in connexion with the prophet before us, than with some others; for there is but one passage in his book to which it would probably be applied. I make upon it here only the general observation, that, before we can use it with any confidence, we must be persuaded, that political sagacity, just observation of the signs of the times, mere common sense, and easily accessible, obvious knowledge of the relations of states, are not, in the given case, competent to that which we are apt to attribute to supernatural light. If I were threatening Ireland with oppression, I could not hesitate to threaten it on the part of England, because England is able to exercise such oppression on its neighbour island, and to prevent every other nation from doing so. For the same reason, if I were declaring that Canada or Mexico would be overrun, I should not hesitate to say, that it would be by the arms of this republic. Knowledge of the relations and habits of a nation might even enable one to be much more precise, to a degree, that, to readers

* Amos i. 5.

† i. 15.

‡ i. 6.

§ i. 9.

in after times, unacquainted with such relations, institutions, and habits, might seem extraordinary. For instance; had I been satisfied, at the time of the last rising in Poland, that it would be unsuccessful, I could not have hesitated to say, if occasion led to it, that its nobles would be sent to Siberia; a definiteness which might well surprise a reader in a remote age, who, without knowing on what it was founded, should become acquainted with it, and learn, that it coincided with the subsequent fact.

The passage of Amos, to which I just now referred, is that where it is said, that the Syrians "shall be led captive to Kir." * What was meant by Kir is uncertain. Perhaps the prophet intended to say, in an expression rather of poetical emphasis than of prosaic accuracy, "to the country whence the Syrians came as colonists, they shall go back as captives;" for elsewhere we read, that Kir was the place of the Syrians' origin.† Jerome understood by Kir, Cyrene, on the northern coast of Africa, and thought a captivity by the Egyptians was denoted. Again; there was a place or places of this name in the country of Moab.‡ If either of these was intended by Amos, then the event did not occur according to the terms of his threat. Others, drawing their interpretation from a passage in the second book of Kings, § understand a river, which still retains a somewhat similar name, emptying into the Caspian sea, in a region at the northeast corner of the Assyrian empire. If this were really the reference of Amos, the language is extremely natural. Assyria, when he wrote, was an ambitious and absorbing power, on the Syrian frontier, having been lately renovated by

* Amos i. 5.

† ix. 7.

‡ Isaiah xv. 1; xvi. 7, 11.

§ 2 Kings xvi. 9.

Arbaces, the Mede. To say, that Syria was to fall at all, was, under the then existing relations, almost the same as to say, that it was to fall under the Assyrian arms; and to say, that its people should be carried captive to Kir, was to say, that they should be carried into a far exile from their homes in the furthest Assyrian provinces. There may have been other reasons, like what I have hinted at in the case of Siberia, for specifying that particular spot; and it is by no means improbable, that the captives were actually conveyed thither. But, on the other hand, as to the credit of the narrative in the anonymous book of Kings, who is to assure us, that the words, "carried away the people captive to Kir," are not a quotation from Amos, in the way of an accommodation of his words to the narrative of the Assyrian captivity, rather than an historical confirmation of them? *

There is one passage in this book, which treats of the Messiah's times. Part of it is related, in the book of Acts,† to have been quoted in the council at Jerusalem by St. James, with alterations, in an important portion of which he followed the Septuagint version. The Hebrew original is represented by the following translation;

* From the Second Book of Chronicles (xxxiii. 11) we learn, that there was a partial captivity of the people of the southern kingdom at Babylon as early as Manasseh's reign, in the beginning of the seventh century B. C. Without the knowledge of this fact, for which we are indebted only to the writer of Chronicles, for it is not mentioned in the corresponding place in the book of Kings, we should not be able to explain Micah v. 6. Now, if the books of Chronicles rendered us the same service in filling up the *lacunæ* of those of Kings in respect to the kingdom of Israel, that ~~it does~~ in respect to that of Judah, it is not unlikely, that the allusion, in the passage above commented on, would be made clear by the mention of some Assyrian inroad, near to the time of Amos, of which we are not now informed.

† Acts xv. 16-18.

"In that day I will raise up the fallen tabernacle of David,
And I will close up its breaches,
And raise up its ruins,
And I will build it as in the days of old,
That they, who are called by my name, may possess the remnant
of Edom,
And all the nations.
Thus saith Jehovah, who doth this." — Amos ix. 11, 12.

Whether the Greek or the Hebrew be the genuine text, — either of which suppositions is equally reconcilable with the fact of St. James having quoted the words in the form that he has done, — a meaning consistent with the context will be retained. St. James' words, I believe a moment's inspection will show, imply nothing in respect to a supernatural character in the declaration of Amos which he quotes. Nor is it possible to draw any argument to that effect from the declaration itself. Does any one, I would ask, doubt, that every Jew in Amos' time believed, without any immediate supernatural instruction whatever, all that Amos here expresses; namely, that there should be a descendant of David, who should build up his fallen tabernacle, and raise up its ruins, and conquer the neighbouring heathen, and impart to them true religion? What circumstances are there here described peculiar to Jesus, as we know him, which show, that Amos was, or pretended to be, better instructed concerning the true character of the Messiah, than were his contemporaries? Rather, I would ask every careful and discerning reader, whether some of the prevalent error respecting the Messiah's office, as a powerful, prosperous, and parental earthly ruler, does not mingle in his words; I do not mean, in the twelfth verse, which speaks in the Hebrew of conquests in Idumea, — for I found no argument on the integrity of that text (which is doubtful), — but in the last three verses of his book. Can any

one persuade himself, that it is the mission of Jesus of Nazareth, which is there described, by one supernaturally, and, of course, correctly, instructed concerning its character?

“ Behold the days come, saith Jehovah,
That the plougher shall draw near to the reaper,
And the treader of grapes to the sower of the seed ;
And the mountains shall drop new wine,
And all the hills shall melt.
I will bring back the captives of my people Israel,
And they shall build the desolate cities, and shall inhabit them ;
And they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine of them ;
They shall also make gardens, and eat their fruit.
I will plant them in their land,
And they shall no more be rooted up from the land, which I
have given them,
Saith Jehovah, thy God.” — ix. 13–15.

I must go further, and having urged, that there is no proof, to be derived from the book, of that miraculous information concerning the future, to which the writer advances no claim, I must suggest, that there are statements, which a comparison with the facts more or less positively forbids us to regard in that light. I will present some such, in the order in which they occur, premising, that, while the greatest pains have been bestowed in bringing forward language, which it seemed would bear to have a supernatural construction put upon it, scarcely any attention has been given to language of an opposite character.

“ Proclaim ye, in the palaces in Ashdod,
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt,
And say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria ;
Behold the great tumults in the midst of her,
And the oppressed within her !
For they have no care to do right, saith Jehovah ;
They treasure up rapine and robbery in their palaces.
Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah ;
An enemy shall encompass the land,
And shall bring down thy strength from thee,
And thy palaces shall be plundered.” — iii. 9–11.

Here the Philistines of Ashdod, and the Egyptians, appear to be called on to be the instruments of divine vengeance against Samaria, which we know that they were not. I do not urge this strongly, because the words will perhaps bear another construction, which has been put upon them by the commentators, representing the people of Ashdod and Egypt as summoned to be spectators rather than instruments of the coming judgments. That which I first mentioned, however, is the better interpretation; and the Septuagint translators, — with a view, as it would seem, to reconcile the prophet's text with the historical fact, — have changed the word "Ashdod" to "Assyria."

Further on, it is said, according to the received translation, "I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus." * According to the received translation, I say; for I am by no means sure, that we ought not to render, "I will carry you into captivity far away, even to Damascus," to which place they were not exiled. But, waving this, and keeping to the common version, is it any thing but our preconceived opinions on the subject, which leads us to imagine, that, by "beyond Damascus," Amos meant, *into the kingdom of Assyria*, to which the Israelites were in fact carried captive? Is it a natural way of describing one kingdom, to call it the country beyond the capital city of another country? Do we not, on this supposition, make Amos speak much as we should do, if, threatening the French with a Russian servitude, we should tell them, that they should be carried into captivity beyond London, or beyond Amsterdam? Let any one look at the geographical relations of the several places on the map, and see if he can doubt about the answer. *Assyria*, indeed, in a certain

* Amos v. 27.

vague sense, was, to the Israelites, beyond Damascus; that is, Damascus lay between the Israelites and part of that empire; but is not the plain reference in Amos' words to remote regions of the *Syrian* kingdom, on the other side of its capital? Are we not led, on all grounds of natural and easy interpretation, to understand him as menacing the Israelites with further and severer visitations of the evils which they had already experienced from Hazael and Benhadad? * And, thus interpreted, it is impossible to consider his words as supernatural prediction, inasmuch as in that sense they were never fulfilled.

The following passage has, as far as language is concerned, all the form of precise prediction; but does any one therefore suppose, either that it was ever in fact circumstantially fulfilled, or that it was intended by its writer as an exact delineation of events known by him to be future? If any one answers in the negative, to him it will appear impossible, in other cases, to frame an argument from a writer's use of similar language, to prove that he pretended to speak by a supernatural authority.

“ The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by himself,
 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts;
 I abhor the pride of Jacob,
 And I hate his palaces;
 I will give up the city, and all that is therein;
 And if ten men remain in one house,
 These also shall die.
 A man's relative, or a burner of the dead, shall take him up,
 To carry his bones out of the house,
 And he shall say to him that is in the innermost part of the
 house,
 Is there yet any with thee?
 And he shall answer, No one!
 Then shall he say, Keep silence!

* 2 Kings xiii. 3.

For it availeth nothing to call upon Jehovah.
For behold Jehovah hath commanded,
And he will smite the great house with breaches,
And the small house with clefts."—vi. 8–11.

In another place, Amos is said to have threatened Jeroboam with a violent death;* a manner, however, in which it is not probable, that that monarch did die; for the historian's words† can hardly be reconciled with the supposition, especially when we consider how important a personage Jeroboam was, and how interesting was every thing which related to his history. It may be, however, that Amos' supposed words in this case, were but an exaggeration of Amaziah, who reported them.

In another passage, the doom of the priest Amaziah is thus announced by the prophet.

" Now, therefore, hear the word of Jehovah ;
Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel !
And speak no word against the house of Isaac !
Therefore thus saith Jehovah ;
Thy wife shall be put to shame in the city,
And thy sons and daughters shall fall by the sword ;
Thy land shall be divided by the line,
And thou shalt die in a polluted land,
And Israel shall surely be led captive from his own land. "
— vii. 16, 17.

Now not only have we no information, that the events in question took place as they are here described, but there is no explanation of the known facts, which can make it in any degree probable. Jeroboam was still living, as the context shows, when this declaration was made, and the priest Amaziah was no doubt at least thirty years old, that is, had arrived at the priestly age. But the captivity did not take place till more than sixty years after Jeroboam's death, at which time

* Amos vii. 11.

† 2 Kings xiv. 29.

Amaziah, on the closest calculation, must have been, if he was living, more than ninety years old; and, if he had been priest some years at the time when Amos addressed him, or if Jeroboam lived some years longer, the probability of Amaziah's living to see the time of the captivity is just so much diminished.

Once more; will any one circumspectly consider the whole of the following passage (parts of which I have quoted before for a different purpose), and say whether its meaning, considered as literal, supernatural prediction, was ever fulfilled?

“ For behold, I will command,
And I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations,
As one sifteth corn with a sieve,
And a grain shall not fall upon the ground.
But all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword,
Who say, Evil shall not approach, nor fall upon us.

In that day I will raise up the fallen tabernacle of David,
And I will close up the breaches thereof,
And raise up its ruins,
And I will build it, as in the days of old.
That they, who are called by my name, may possess the remnant
of Edom,
And all the nations.
Thus saith Jehovah, who doeth this.

Behold the days come, saith Jehovah,
That the plougher shall draw near to the reaper,
And the treader of grapes to the sower of the seed;
And the mountains shall drop new wine,
And all the hills shall melt.
I will bring back the captives of my people Israel,
And they shall build the desolate cities, and shall inhabit them;
And they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine of them;
They shall also make gardens, and eat their fruit.
I will plant them in their land,
And they shall no more be rooted up from the land, which I
have given them,
Saith Jehovah, thy God.” — ix. 9 – 15.

When the time of calamity came, did the sinners of God's people, Israel, all die by the sword, while the

good were so sifted out as to be every one preserved? Were the captives of God's people, Israel, the ten tribes, ever brought back, to build again and inhabit the desolate cities, and plant the deserted vineyards, and be so established as never to be rooted up in their land, which, with a wonderful fertility, rewarded their toil of cultivation? Who does not see, in these words, the language of one, who will not permit himself to expect any thing ultimately but good for the nation of his brethren, and who connects, with this persuasion, the current opinions respecting the Messiah's office? Am I told, that the events described are yet to come? St. James did not think so. He regarded the prophet's notation of time, as having reference to the Messiah's age, which is long ago passed. Or, if any one think, that his accommodation of Amos' words does not imply this view, still where, I would ask, are the ten tribes, who are to be so restored to their Canaanitish home? Lost, as to their individuality; mingled, merged, vanished, centuries since, in the mass of humanity.

In the beginning of the chapter from which I took the last quotation, a form of language is resorted to, which is also used in four other instances in the course of the last three chapters.* Says the prophet;

"I saw the Lord standing upon the altar; and he said,
Smite the capitals, so that the pillars shall tremble," &c. — ix. 1.

The question for us here is, whether the writer intended or not to describe a real transaction; viz. a visible manifestation of Jehovah, and an audible utterance of his purpose. The question, as I regard it, is the same as this, whether there be, as the rhetoricians have said, a legitimate figure of speech, common in

* Viz. in chap. vii. 1-9, and viii. 1-3.

poetry, but not peculiar to it, to which they give the name of *Vision*; and, if there be, whether its use, not condemned in us cold westerns, is to be denied to the warmth and sweep of an Oriental imagination. When Pope says, — and that without any previous hint of a figurative meaning, —

“ Yes, *I beheld* the Athenian queen
Descend, in all her sober charms ;
And ‘ Take,’ *she said*, and smiled serene,
‘ Take from this hand celestial arms,’ ”

does any reader, on pain of being thought to criticize licentiously, feel obliged to take him at his word, giving to that word its most prosaic interpretation; or would it make any difference, as to this point, if we understood the poet to be a believer in the existence of the Athenian queen? If even that which is clearly literal, in the description of visible objects, is mingled, in the same paragraph or sentence, with what has the appearance of figure, does that show, that all must be taken as literal alike? Lord Byron writes;

“ I stood in Venice, on the bridge of sighs,
A palace and a prison on each hand ;
I saw from out her waves the structures rise,
As at the stroke of an enchanter’s wand ;
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me,” &c.

Here the vision of Venice and its structures is literal and real, but who that can relish poetry, — or who that cannot, — understands the writer as vouching for the substantial existence of what he introduces in the same sentence, the expanded, cloudy wings of the thousand years? * — Again; in the same poet, after a long pas-

* Nothing can be more manifestly erroneous than the doctrine, with which, — when urging a just interpretation of some animated passage, — one is constantly met on the part of stupidly prosaic annotators upon Scrip-

sage filled with descriptions of real objects, occur the following lines, without any other notice of a designed transition than what every intelligent reader's mind may be expected to supply.

"Long had I mused, and treasured every trace,
The wreck of Greece recorded of her race,
When lo! a giant form before me strode,
And Pallas hailed me in her own abode.
Yes, 't was *Minerva's self*;"

of whose appearance a description follows, and then she is represented as speaking in the poet's hearing; the passage resembling, in these respects, the passage from Amos, which gave rise to these remarks. The fact, that such poetical imagery differs, in this case, from that of the passage which it is brought to illustrate, inasmuch as in the one case a fictitious deity is introduced, in the other the true God, has no bearing upon the argument. It is true, that it is less agreeable to our more chastened taste to introduce the name

ture; namely, that it is bold criticism to suppose literal and figurative representations to be blended in the same passage. The fact is, on the contrary, that passages innumerable, which one reads without a moment's hesitation respecting their sense, owe their peculiar vigor to this very combination. What, for instance, could be more intelligible, than the following sentence, of which the first part, with a slight mixture of metaphor, contains a strictly literal representation, and the last, divided from it by a comma, is poetry of the boldest character?

"Once, in my sad and philosophic youth,
(For very philosophic in my dawn
And twilight of intelligence was I,)
Once, in this cock-crow of philosophy,
Much tired with rest, and with the stable earth,
I launched my little bark, and put to sea,
Errant for geste and enterprise of wit,
Through all this circumnavigable globe."

Had these lines been written by an ancient Hebrew, instead of a modern Englishman, we should not have failed to be called on to believe, as a great mystery of religion, that he, to whom they relate, set forth in a little boat, to circumnavigate the globe alone, in quest of intellectual adventure.

of the true God into a fiction; but this circumstance does not affect the aptness of the quotation to the purpose for which I have introduced it, that of illustrating the established usages of poetical composition.

Nor, as I have remarked, is this figure so bold as to be confined in its use to poetry. Cicero, for instance, did not scruple to introduce it into a forensic argument, in a sentence occurring between two others of the most literal character.* Nor have the most unadventurous critics hesitated to admit its use in Scripture, though they have strangely failed to give to the fact that application in which it is of the highest importance. Who would undertake to explain, for instance, the fiftieth Psalm, or portions of the eighteenth and the eighty-ninth, on any other principle? "It would be an infinite task," says Lowth, "to specify every instance in the sacred poems which, on this occasion [viz. the illustration of the figure *prosopopœia*], might be referred to as worthy of notice, or to remark the easy, the natural, the bold and sudden personifications; the dignity, importance, and impassioned severity of the characters. It would be difficult to describe the energy of that eloquence which is *attributed to Jehovah himself*, and which appears so suitable in all respects to the divine majesty, or to display the force and beauty of the language which is so admirably and peculiarly adapted to each character; the probability of the fiction, and the excellence of the imitation." †

* "Videor mihi hanc urbem videre, lucem orbis terrarum, atque arcem omnium gentium, subito uno incendio concidentem; cerno animo, sepulta in patria, miseros atque insepultos acervos civium; *versatur mihi ante oculos aspectus Cethegi*, et furor in vestra cæde bacchantis."—"Oratio in L. Catilinam Quarta," § 6.

† "Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews"; Lect. xiii.—The earliest instance, in which language of a similar structure to that of Amos, above remarked upon, is attributed to any one of those called by

Some critics have remarked upon a certain rusticity in the style of Amos,* and accounted for it by reference to the occupation, which he is said to have followed. With some exceptions, however, as to orthography and grammar, which are quite as probably to be traced to the copyists, his style can scarcely be said to betray any want of cultivation. His figures, as was natural from his early circumstances, are mostly drawn from rural objects; but being well chosen, they have, on this account, only the more congruity and force. And in some respects the structure of his composition is much more than commonly artificial. The closely resembling forms of the remonstrances against the several nations, specified in the first chapter and the beginning of the second, present an example.† Another of the same kind occurs in a portion of the fourth chapter;‡ and another in the description of the visions, which are described in the first half of the seventh.

We have an instance, in this book, of that bold form of illustration of political disaster, of which I spoke in a

the name of *prophet*, occurs in the first book of Kings xxii. 15–23; a passage which I suppose no one can read carefully, and entertain a doubt, that Micaiah, there spoken of, did not mean to describe appearances which literally he had witnessed, but to use a form of address suited to give to his warning the greatest energy and impression. Do I not need to be pardoned for asking the question, whether any one understands Micaiah as saying, that he actually saw God inviting a deception to be practised, in some way, on Ahab, and then commissioning a lying spirit to animate the false prophets in whom Ahab placed confidence? Yet, if verbal simplicity of narrative, apart from all other considerations, is to be taken as proof that a literal transaction is described, to what bold representation of the kind, in the Later Prophets, could the argument more confidently be applied, than to this language of Micaiah?

* So Jerome says (*Præfatio in Amos*); “*Ex numero pastorum fuit Amos imperitus sermone, sed non scientiâ.*”

† The reference in Amos ii. 1, appears to be to the event related in 2 Kings iii. 26, 27.

‡ iv. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11.

former Lecture.* The subject is the calamities destined to come upon Israel for the punishment of its sins ;

“ It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah,
That I will cause the sun to go down at noon,
And will darken the land in the clear day.
 I will turn your feasts into mourning,
 And all your songs into lamentation ;
 I will bring sackcloth upon all loins,
 And baldness upon all heads.
 I will fill the land with mourning, as for an only son,
 And its end shall be as a day of bitter woe.” — viii. 9, 10.

In closing these remarks upon the book before us, I select three passages, which appear to me more obscure than others, for the purpose of attempting to elucidate them by means of a brief paraphrase.

“ Can two walk together,
 Unless they agree together ?
 Will the lion roar in the forest,
 When he seeth no prey ?
 Will the young lion cry aloud from his den,
 If he have nothing to seize ?
 Can a bird fall into a snare upon the earth,
 Where none is set for him ?
 Will one take up a snare from the ground,
 When it hath caught nothing ?
 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city,
 And the people not be afraid ?
 Shall there be evil upon the city,
 And Jehovah not have done it ?
 Surely the Lord Jehovah doeth nothing,
 But he revealeth his secret
 To his servants the prophets.
 When the lion roareth, who will not fear ?
 When the Lord Jehovah speaketh, who will not prophesy ? ”
 — iii. 3–8.

The connexion here I take to be as follows ; “ Can you expect me any longer to be your friend, when you no longer agree with me, when your conduct no longer

* See pp. 328, 329.

accords with my will? — Do you despise my threats? Will the lion roar, except when about to take prey, or the young lion, except when he is going to seize? No more do I threaten, except when my judgments are near at hand. — And when your calamities come, remember, that it was as certainly by my appointment, as a bird's falling into a snare shows, that a snare has been set. A trap will not spring, except it have caught something; no more will my judgments be sent, except to take full effect. — Will you still disregard these threats, or refuse to trace their execution to me? When an alarm is given, is it not to be expected, that the people will heed it? and when evil befalls them, it can only be under my providence. — Listen then to him, who, in the admonitions he conveys to you, is truly denouncing the vengeance against you which I mean to execute. — When I speak, as when a lion roars, all ought to fear. When I declare my will, all ought to make it known [or, to be instructed].”

Again;

“ Woe to them, that ask for the day of Jehovah!
What is the day of Jehovah to you?
It shall be darkness and not light.
As if a man fled from a lion,
And a bear met him;
Or went into a house and leaned his hand on a wall,
And a serpent bit him;
So shall the day of Jehovah be darkness, and not light,
Even thick darkness, and no brightness in it.” — v. 18–20.

The force of these verses, as I conceive it, may be represented thus. “Alas! for those who ask, When will that day of vengeance, of which you speak, arrive? who tauntingly inquire, Where is the promise of his coming? That day will come, and, when it comes, will change the contemptuous mood of such scorers. It will bring them no joy; it will allow them no more in

their levity ; but meet them with its array of terrific dangers on every side."

The sense intended to be conveyed by the three visions described in the first nine verses of the seventh chapter, I understand to be, that Jehovah had repeatedly spared the people of Israel, when they had so provoked him as to deserve extirpation, but that now the measure of their iniquities was full, and he would spare no longer. The representation here is in effect the same as is made in the first chapter, respecting Judah and some heathen nations, where it is said, that "for three transgressions and for four," — that is, for a hopeless repetition of transgression, — Jehovah would no longer withhold the due recompense. The prophet exhibits him, in the visionary delineations, as twice meditating the destruction of Israel, and each time, before the ruin was consummated, — while the locusts were yet devouring, and the fire had not reached the dwellings, — as being moved by prayer, so as to relent in his purpose, and arrest the destroyer ; but as at last so incensed at the obduracy of the reprieved criminals, as to command the agents of destruction to go on, and accomplish all their work.

LECTURE XXXVI.

HOSEA AND JOEL.

TIME OF HOSEA. — SUBJECT OF HIS PROPHECY. — MEANING OF THE REPRESENTATION, THAT THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO HIM. — FIGURATIVE IMPORT OF LANGUAGE DESCRIBING CERTAIN ACTIONS DONE BY HIM. — EXPLANATION OF THE REPRESENTATIONS HERE EMPLOYED. — ANTICIPATION OF HAPPIER TIMES, AND OF THE REIGN OF A PRINCE OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID. — IMPORT OF REFERENCES BY HOSEA TO THE MESSIAH'S REIGN, — AND TO THE FUTURE FORTUNES OF HIS NATION. — WANT OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SOME OF HIS VIEWS AND THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY. — LOWTH'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS STYLE. — TIME OF JOEL. — SUBJECT OF HIS PROPHECY. — HIS DESCRIPTION OF AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS, — AND CALL UPON THE PEOPLE TO SEEK SAFETY BY REPENTANCE. — MEANING OF HIS REPRESENTATION OF JEHOVAH'S SPEAKING. — HIS REFERENCE TO THE TIMES OF THE MESSIAH.

It was mentioned in my last Lecture, that Hosea, like Amos, addressed himself chiefly to the kingdom of Israel. Who Hosea was, we have no knowledge, other than what is furnished by the inscription prefixed to his book, which is of doubtful authenticity, though there is, perhaps, no sufficient reason for distrusting the statement which it contains. He is therein represented as the son of a certain Beerî, and as having flourished in the reign of Jeroboam, king of Israel, and in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Between the last year of Jeroboam and the first of Hezekiah, intervened a period of fifty-six years.* Accordingly, if we rely on the

* Comp. 2 Kings xiv. 29; xv. 8, 13, 17, 22, 27; xvii. 1; xviii. 1.

inscription, we shall understand Hosea to have attained a great age. Whether Israel or Judah was his native country, we have no means for determining. The nature of the exhortations and threats, in his book, corresponds well with the condition of Israel, during the unsettled and calamitous times which followed the death of Jeroboam, when two *interregna*, the one of twelve, and the other of nine years, were divided and followed by the reigns of some of the worst and most unfortunate princes who ever occupied the throne of Israel.

As I understand Hosea, he, like his predecessor, Amos, gives expression, in this book, to the sentiments naturally excited, in a pious mind, by the view of the prevailing iniquities, and exhibits the calamities, which, — according to the obvious course of events, and agreeably to the terms of God's own threats, uttered through his servant, Moses, — could not fail to come upon the Israelitish people, unless they turned from the sins by which they were provoking him. And, like Amos, he looks forward to the time when they shall thus repent, and when they shall be united with Judah, in peace and prosperity, under a common head. I look in vain for proof, that he pretended to supernatural knowledge of the future, or supernatural endowments of any other kind, or that he possessed either.

In the inscription to Hosea we find language which will frequently meet us in the introductions to the later prophetic books, as well as in the other parts of them. "The word of the Lord which," as our translators render, "came to Hosea, the son of Beeri"; more literally, "the word of the Lord which *was* to Hosea." * It is

* The sentence presents one of those instances, in which, from the inevitable baldness and awkwardness of a phraseology, which keeps close to the original, we are commonly fain to take refuge in paraphrase; and the evil of paraphrase is, that it scarcely fails, in one way or

simply the substantive verb which is used here and in other like places.

To understand the force of this expression, it is necessary to call to mind the fact, that, wherever it is used as an inscription to books, or to longer or shorter portions of them, we invariably, in the passage which it precedes, find God introduced as *speaking*.* In other words, we find the writer *putting into the mouth of God*, if one may so say, the sentiments which he utters, to give them the greater solemnity and effect, by the use of that same natural expedient of poetry, which was remarked on in my last Lecture. The form of the inscription thus properly corresponds to the construction of the passage, which, in each case, follows it, wherein the writer represents God as addressing himself or the people, — whichever the case may be, — with words of counsel, direction, consolation, rebuke, and the like. Now, it is true, it is a question to be answered, whether this representation of God, as *speaking*, is meant by the writer for a literal or a poetical representation. That a poetical representation of the kind is a well authorized, and not uncommon artifice of speech, I argued in my last Lecture; and we unavoid-

another, to give some unauthorized definiteness or fulness to the sense. This our translators have done in the use of the word *came*; for to be may take place in the way of *coming*, or in some other way. The word, in this connexion, may quite as well mean to be *intrusted*, as to be *addressed*, which latter it is commonly understood to import.

* Zechariah i. 7, is not an exception to this remark, though its form of expression is peculiar. It is said; "The word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying," and then immediately the prophet speaks, "*I saw by night, and behold, a man riding upon a red horse!*" But in the passage thus introduced, God, in verses 13, 21, and others, is represented as speaking. So in Joel, though immediately after this language, in i. 1, follows an expostulation of the prophet in his own person, the substance of the book is made up of what are represented as the Lord's own words. See ii. 12 *et seq.*

ably have recourse to this view in explaining such passages as that, for instance, at the beginning of the book of Amos. But, thus much being allowed concerning the meaning of the representation itself, no more is necessary to explain the form of the title, which precedes that representation. It is the appropriately descriptive title of what is coming. No other would be equally so. The writer is about to introduce God as uttering words; and, accordingly, he, or some one for him, — for the question of authenticity is for the present immaterial, — takes this for an inscription; “The *word* of the Lord which came [or was] to me [or, to him].” If he would have any inscription, what other could be so fit? and this equally, if the representation of God’s speaking was intended to be literal, or if it was not so intended.

We are familiar with this fact occurring in other writings, and with the reasonable interpretation which a reader spontaneously puts upon it. One poet of our day has entitled one of his compositions “A Vision of Judgment.” Another has written what he calls “A Sight of Christ,” and “A Sight of Heaven in Sickness.” So when we meet with poems with such titles as “The Lament of Mary, Queen of Scots,” “The Farmer’s Morning Salutation,” and “The Petition of Bruar Water,” or with a sermon of one of our divines, called “Heaven’s Alarm to the World,” we understand the title, in each case, to be simply descriptive of the shape into which the author has seen fit to cast his thoughts. We satisfy ourselves, by reading the composition, that it is not literal representation which is intended; and, being satisfied of this, we do not look to the titles for testimony to a matter of fact, which shall lead us to reverse our decision. We expect to find the title corresponding to, and significant of, the form

which has been selected for the piece. We should be surprised and displeased, if there were not this conformity. But if, for such reasons of propriety, the conformity must exist, the mere fact of its existence will, of course, furnish no basis for ulterior inferences.

Accordingly, I conceive, that the meaning of the first inscription, which I regard as being designed for the whole book (another being given, immediately after, for the first part, separately considered), would be justly represented in one of the following ways; "God's message, or admonition, or instruction, [that is, to Israel,] which was committed or intrusted to Hosea;" and that then the language is to be interpreted, as has been said, on the ground of the poetical representation which follows, in which the prophet produces the Deity as addressing to the people the exhortations which make the matter of his book. If we should understand the inscription, differently from what I have done, as belonging only to the first portion of the book, where God is represented as speaking to the prophet, — a connexion in which the language often elsewhere occurs, — then we should paraphrase it, "The word of the Lord *addressed* to Hosea," but still we should interpret it, with reference to the figurative representation which follows, of God's making a communication in words, and should understand it as constituting the appropriately descriptive heading to that representation.

The second inscription,* relating, as it purports to do, to the first portion of the book, — a portion, which we may conveniently understand as extending to the fourth chapter, where a natural division occurs, — would be, if exactly rendered, "The beginning of the word of the Lord [or of the Lord's speaking] *in Hosea*"

* Hosea i. 2.

[that is, as I think it is best understood, in *the book of Hosea*]; the whole sentence being tantamount to this; "The first of what God, in Hosea's prophecy, is presented as saying;" a form of inscription, which seems to indicate a different hand than the prophet's. But the question respecting the genuineness of the verse is in no way material.

Next follows a passage, similar, in the main features of its construction, to what we shall frequently meet with in the course of the prophecies. God is represented as commanding the prophet to marry an unchaste woman, and become with her the parent of profligate children, to whom significant names are given, connecting their persons and fortunes with the fortunes of the Israelitish nation, of which they are expressly said to be intended for emblems.* A prognostic of happier times is then introduced,† followed by an expostulation with Israel on account of the prevailing sins;‡ after which the prophet represents himself as directed to contract a second marriage similar to the first, and this, too, with a view to impress a lesson concerning the temporary separation, and the final reconciliation to God, of idolatrous Israel. §

That any commentators should have regarded these marriages of the prophet, and births of his children, as real transactions, would be a circumstance to excite our special wonder, if any thing of the kind could surprise him who has some acquaintance with the history of Biblical interpretation. If fictitious representations, if extended figures of speech, are to be allowed anywhere, as instruments of illustration and impression, where are we to look for them, if not in impassioned poetry like that of the book before us? If we affirm, that figura-

* Hosea i. 2-9.

† i. 10, 11.

‡ ii. 1-23.

§ iii. 1-5.

tive representations, of this particular kind, are not to be admitted as belonging to Hebrew poetry, we reduce ourselves to the necessity of resorting to the greatest extravagances in interpretation.* And, if there are cases of such figurative language, who can doubt, that this demands to be reckoned as one of them? Not to dwell on the extraordinary character of the supposition, that God's prophet was directed, in two successive instances, to become the husband of vicious women, and in three to become the parent of licentious children, one cannot fail to see, that all the prescribed hardship and sacrifice would be incurred to no purpose, as far as the ostensible object was concerned. The rebukes and the menaces, which the prophet was to enforce, would receive no confirmation whatever from the transactions in question, supposing them to have actually taken place. They would receive only such illustration as would be found in introducing these latter, by way of comparison, into a verbal appeal. And this use the transactions would no better serve, if real, than if introduced as a picture of the imagination. Besides, let any one consider the time necessary to have elapsed between the marriage, with which the lesson to Israel begins, and the birth of the third child, with which it closes, and ask himself, whether any supposed impressiveness, derived to the lesson from the actual occurrence of the intervening events, could possibly compensate for the loss of impression, consequent on the completion of the lesson being suspended so long.

All nations and ages have their own peculiar forms of literary exhibition, in which they invest varieties of address to the mind, which varieties are essentially

* See, e. g., Jeremiah xiii. 1-11. Drusius ("Commentarius in Prophetas Minores xii.," pp. 1-3) argues well for the correctness of this view, and quotes judicious reasoning from Jerome to the same point.

common to them all. The Hebrews had their peculiar forms, which, no doubt, are somewhat different from ours ; but no more different,—I think not so much so,—as we might naturally expect from their distance from us in point of situation and time. In the substance of the representation before us, considered as figurative, there is nothing entirely foreign to our own habits of thought, nor any thing which we ourselves might not adopt, with a mere change of the rhetorical adjuncts. If one, with a modern American mind, will suppose himself in the Israelitish prophet's place, and desirous of rebuking his nation for the repeated unfaithfulness of their successive generations to the Lord, who had represented himself from the first as having espoused their nation, I ask, whether he would find it unnatural to conceive of himself as addressing them as follows ;

“Methought God said to me, ‘Love, as I have done, an object on which your love will be thrown away.’ By bidding me set my highest affection on one who was most unworthy of it, and most cruelly wronged it, he made me feel, through the bitterness of my own experience, the ingratitude and infidelity of Israel, which he had chosen for himself. Methought he made me the parent of children ; and, while my parental affections clung to them in their infancy, he bade me give them names significant of displeasure and of purposed vengeance against their mother and themselves, thus bringing home to my own mind a sense of the parental love, on his part, which had been wronged, and the parental tenderness which had needed to be suppressed, when justice compelled him to renounce, for their sins, the successive generations of his people. For it is of you, O Israelites, that I am speaking. Your nation has been a faithless bride to him who has deigned to call himself your husband. And, in the successive periods

of its history, it has been the parent of a faithless race. Scarcely had the threat of the disasters, which its sins deserved, gone forth against one generation, before another weaker, but no less impious, generation arose, to repeat the provocation, and check every remaining feeling of pity, and draw down a yet heavier denunciation of coming evil. And now has succeeded yet another, which, bold and strong in its sins, has filled up the measure of defiance; and already God declares, ye Israelites, though his heart yearns for you, like that of a parent for disobedient offspring, that you are no longer his people, and he will not be your God; and, behold, the execution of the threat of disinheritorance is even now hanging over you."

I submit, that we have here, in a shape somewhat more conformed to our tastes and practices in composition, the substance of the representation in the first nine verses of Hosea. If, in the filling up of this outline, we are sometimes at a loss for a satisfactory interpretation, it is no more than we must confess ourselves often to be, in other parts of the book. For the style of Hosea is so abrupt, elliptical, concise, and adventurous, that no other book, among those of the Prophets, presents greater difficulties to the verbal expositor.

The last clause in the second verse expressly explains the object of the representation which follows, as intended to set forth the relation in which the Israelitish people stood to Jehovah, in respect to unfaithfulness in the allegiance due to him. The other names in the passage being significant, the commentators have assumed, that that of Gomer, the treacherous wife, must be so likewise, and have been at much pains to find for it an appropriate meaning; but without success, and, I think, without reason. I take "Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim," to have been simply the proper

name of some notoriously vicious woman in the prophet's time, to whom he compares the Israelitish nation, by way of setting forth, in the most expressive manner, the magnitude of the nation's wickedness. To call Israel by the name of a well-known eminent sinner, effects his purpose better, than to compare it to a sinner in general terms.

The three children of the prophet are commonly understood to denote distinct generations proceeding from the same Israelitish stock. But I have seen no satisfactory designation of the three periods in Israelitish history, to which the names of the three children, and the sentences passed upon them respectively, are to be understood to correspond; nor of the representation of the first and last children being sons, and the other a daughter. I suggest the following explanation.

The period of the first-mentioned child, or generation of Israelites, is that of the dynasty of Jeroboam the First, of Baasha, and Omri. This period lasted ninety years, and terminated in Joram, whom Jehu, the founder of the next dynasty, put to death at Jezreel, a circumstance which is alluded to in the fourth verse.*

During this first period the Israelitish people was, for the most part, flourishing and powerful. It was otherwise during the period which succeeded,† the feeble and effeminate wickedness of which I take to be represented under the character of an unworthy daughter. The protracted and desperate apostasy of the people during this time, the prophet represents as calling down the sentence expressed in the daughter's name. During this time, the worship of God, in its purity, had never been maintained in Israel, and other national sins had incurred the divine displeasure, which gives occasion to the prophet, looking back upon the

* 2 Kings ix. 21 - 24.

† 2 Kings x. 32, 33.

time which had then elapsed, to represent God as saying, that, as Jacob's name had once been changed to Israel, so that of Israel, borne by the people, might now be changed to Jezreel, a name pointing to its punishment, instead of a name pointing to its favor, the name thus last imposed being significant of the destruction, which, for the sins of the people, was destined to fall upon Jehu's house and kingdom, similar to that, which, at Jezreel, he had himself brought upon Joram.

The birth of a second son I take to refer to the time, when, under the prosperous administration of Jeroboam the Second, the power of the Israelitish people, in its whole pristine extent,—its former manliness, so to speak,—had been restored.* The period, thus introduced, was not yet closed, at the time when reference is here made to it, whether we consider Hosea to have written the passage before or after the death of Jeroboam. But its character was sufficiently developed; and it is such as leads the prophet to give to the person, who is represented as its emblem, the expressive name of "Not-my-people," indicating the fixed divine purpose to disown and abandon a race so pertinacious in its sins.

Having uttered these threats, the prophet, indulging the natural feelings of a Jew, and persuading himself that the nation's separation from Jehovah will be only temporary, looks forward to a future time when it will be adopted again, and all its prosperity restored and increased; and this he represents as taking place by the reunion of Israel and Judah under one head, as they had been united in the prosperous days of David and Solomon.† Though it has deserved to be called Jezreel, yet the prophet represents God as declaring, "Great will be its day,"—signal, in time to come,

* 2 Kings xiv. 25.

† Hosea i. 10, 11.

will be its prosperity. And, though its past generations have deserved the names significant of rejection, which were applied in the first chapter, the condition of the future generations will be reversed, and they may mutually address each other with the names *Pitied* and *My People*. Then follows the striking passage, extending to the end of the chapter, in which God calls upon the future reformed generations to expostulate with their mother Israel for the sins which now she is tolerating. A more convenient division than the present would be made, if the first chapter embraced only the first nine verses of the book, and the remaining two verses were made to introduce the second.

In the third chapter, to which the same principles of interpretation apply as to the beginning of the first, the prophet, under the figure of a woman, once licentious, and now wedded to a husband, from whom, however, she continues separate, till her repentance and fidelity shall be proved, evidently speaks of a time, when the Israelitish nation, deprived of their independence and of their national worship, should be *put on probation*, so to speak, for a restoration to Jehovah's favor. So, indeed, the language is explained in the fourth verse. This passage was very probably written after the final overthrow of the Israelitish kingdom early in the reign of Hezekiah, with whom Hosea is said, in the inscription, to have been contemporary ; * or, at all events, after the conquests of Tiglath-pileser, which date eighteen years earlier, in the reign of Ahaz, Hezekiah's predecessor.† Here, again, the prophet refers to a future expected restoration of the prosperity of Israel, to be found in a restoration of their allegiance to a prince of the house of David.‡ From such hints as

* 2 Kings xvii. 6 *et seq.*

† xvi. 7-9.

‡ Hosea iii. 5.

that in this verse, of the rightful authority of David's house over the northern kingdom, I think it may be inferred, with a degree of probability, that Hosea was a citizen of Judah, and not of Israel.

The general sense of the rest of the book, consisting, as it does, of a succession of reproofs, exhortations, and menaces, founded upon the prevailing disorders and crimes, is sufficiently obvious; and I shall not attempt to follow it further, as the particular remarks, which might be offered to illustrate the language of separate verses, would require no less than a minute and extended commentary. Bertholdt and Eichhorn, and De Wette on a more limited scale, undertake to show, from incidental hints, the times when different portions were written. But, as it seems to me, without success, for want of sufficient data.

If we look in Hosea for predictions of the Messiah, I believe we shall find nothing which shows him to have been supernaturally acquainted with the character and office of Jesus of Nazareth, or to have had any other conceptions of the expected deliverer, than what were current among his nation, in his age. He speaks of prosperous times for Israel, but they are times of political prosperity. In Hengstenberg's "Christology," which is of as good authority as any other work on the subject, the following passages are referred to, as containing Hosea's predictions. I cite them at length, as fair specimens of the evidence commonly adduced under this head; and I submit, that it is taking the lowest ground which the fact would sustain, to say, that between Hosea's language, and the Messiah's mission, such as we know it to have occurred, there is no correspondence whatever, of a nature to show, that Hosea had supernatural knowledge upon the subject.

" At that time, saith Jehovah,
 Thou shalt call me, My HUSBAND ;
 Thou shalt no more call me, My BAAL ;
 For I will take away the name of the Baals out of her mouth,
 And their name shall no more be uttered.
 At that time will I make for them a covenant
 With the beasts of the forest, and with the birds of heaven,
 And with the creeping things of the ground.
 The bow, and the sword, and the battle will I break from the
 land,
 And I will cause them to lie down in safety.
 I will betroth thee to me for ever ;
 Yea, I will betroth thee to me in righteousness, and in justice,
 And in kindness, and in tender love.
 Yea, I will betroth thee to me in faithfulness,
 And thou shalt know Jehovah.

At that time will I hear, saith Jehovah ;
 I will hear the heavens ;
 And they shall hear the earth,
 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil,
 And they shall hear Jezreel.
 And I will plant her in the land ;
 And I will have pity upon her that was called ' Unpitied ' ;
 And I will say to them, called ' Not-my-people', Thou art my
 people ;
 And they shall say, Thou art my God." — ii. 16-23.

" Afterward shall the sons of Israel return,
 And seek Jehovah their God, and David their king,
 And shall reverence Jehovah and his goodness in future
 times." — iii. 5.

" I will heal their rebellion ; I will love them freely ;
 For my anger is turned away from them.
 I will be as the dew to Israel ;
 He shall bloom as the lily,
 And strike his roots like Lebanon.
 His branches shall spread,
 And his beauty shall be as the olive-tree,
 And his fragrance as Lebanon.
 They, that dwell under his shadow, shall gather strength ;
 They shall revive as the corn ;
 They shall shoot forth as the vine ;
 Their name shall be like the wine of Lebanon.
 Ephraim shall say, What have I more to do with idols ?
 I will hear him ; I will care for him ;
 I will be like a green olive-tree ;
 From me shall thy fruit be found." — xiv. 4-8.

Are these delineations of the mission of Jesus, and of its objects and results? Do we not know what they were, and does this language describe them? Does it not describe almost any thing else as much? Is it not a mere trifling with all the significance of language, to put any such construction upon this?

Nor are there any such specifications of calamities coming upon the Israelitish nation, as show, that the prophet had, or professed to have, any divinely inspired acquaintance with them. He executed his office in the midst of those disturbed times of the Israelitish commonwealth, which immediately preceded and attended its fall. If he lived only till Hezekiah's accession, he survived the first dismemberment of that state twelve years, and, if he lived till Hezekiah's sixth year, he witnessed its final dissolution. And what he saw already come, he spoke of with the strong feeling which it would naturally excite; and what he saw just coming, he gave warning of, with a sagacious and observing man's confidence, and a patriot's solicitude. But the idea of his having professed supernatural knowledge of the future will not bear to be urged, not merely because there is no proof to sustain it, but because there is that in the book which repels the supposition. It contains no other description of the future so precise, as are some of those, with which, however, it is certain, that the event has not corresponded. The sons of Israel have never, according to the language in one passage,* been adopted again, in immeasurable numbers, for God's people, in the same land where they had been discarded; nor is it conceivable, that they ever should be, for they have not continued a distinct race.

* Hosea i. 10. It must be remembered, that it is to *Israel*, in distinction from *Judah*, that these passages relate.

Nor have the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, according to other passages,* been reunited, as in the first days of the kingdom, under one head, of David's line; nor has Israel, according to yet others, been ever carried captive into Egypt.† If Hosea possessed a supernatural knowledge respecting the events described in these verses, of course they would have come to pass as described. To suppose that he made unauthorized pretension to such knowledge, is to do him a most gratuitous injustice. He neither possessed nor pretended to it. He uses the language of threat and warning, not the language of prediction. ‡

* Hosea i. 11; iii. 5.

† viii. 13; ix. 3-6; to which I think should be also added vii. 16 and xi. 11. — It is true, that, in xi. 5, we read; "They shall no more go down into Egypt." But, if this be the true translation, and if by the *going down* be meant a captivity, still such a contradiction with the other passages I have adduced, is inconsistent with the hypothesis of supernatural prediction. It is probable, however, that we are to understand it interrogatively, "Shall they not go down into Egypt?" The Septuagint version omits the negative pronoun, but gives the verb in the past tense, apparently to escape the contradiction to historical fact, which that omission involves.

‡ The following hints may contribute to a better understanding of a few disconnected passages. In ii. 15, the expression, "I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope," is a reference to Joshua vii. where a divine judgment is said to have fallen upon the nation in that valley; and the meaning is, "I will make this season of my heavy displeasure, like that in ancient times, to be succeeded by a time of joy." — In iv. 3, the experience of divine judgments, according to a form of speech before remarked on as familiar to the prophets, is spoken of under the figure of the dissolution of created things into a chaotic state. — In iv. 4, and v. 10, where there are references to Deut. xvii. 12, and xix. 14, we find instances of a crime being set forth by being compared to another severely condemned by the law; a similar form of expression to that, in which, in the New Testament (Col. iii. 5), covetousness is compared to idolatry. — In iv. 15, the word *ye*, in the last three lines, is the emphatic word. Having rebuked the sins of Israel, the prophet turns to the people of Judah, and bids the latter avoid imitating the former's example. "If Israel does prostitute herself, yet let not Judah resemble her. Come *ye* not, O people of Judah, as Israel has done, to

I conclude these remarks upon Hosea with an extract from Lowth's twenty-first Lecture.

"His style exhibits the appearance of very remote antiquity. It is pointed, energetic, and concise. It bears a distinguished mark of poetical composition, in that pristine brevity and condensation, which is observable in the sentences, and which later writers have, in some measure, neglected. This peculiarity has not escaped the observation of Jerome; 'He is altogether,' says he, speaking of this prophet, 'laconic and sententious.' But this very circumstance, which anciently was supposed, no doubt, to impart uncommon force and elegance, in the present ruinous state of the Hebrew literature, is productive of so much obscurity, that, although the general subject of this writer be sufficiently obvious, he is the most difficult and perplexed of all the prophets. There is, however, another reason for

Gilgal, neither go ye up, like them, to *Bethaven*," that is, to the *house of sin*, the phrase being a play upon the name Bethel, or house of God, where one of the calves of the Israelitish worship was set up. "And swear ye not, saying, 'As Jehovah liveth'; it is a bad omen; for Israel, when it has sworn thus, rebelleth like a refractory heifer," an allusion again, I think, to Jeroboam's image. — In v. 8, 9,

"Look behind thee, O Benjamin!
Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke;
Among the tribes of Israel do I make known what is sure,"

I understand the prophet to be calling on Judah to observe what is the fate of Israel, and see what will also be its own doom, if it provokes him by the like sins. — The force of vii. 3,

"With their wickedness they gladden the king,
And with their falsehoods the princes,"

I take to be, that, so universal is the depravity of the nation, that its very rulers find pleasure in what ought most to distress them. — In vii. 4,

"They are as an oven heated by the baking,
The fire-stirrer desists
Until the dough, which is kneaded, be leavened,"

the sense of the figure is, that God is preparing for their punishment, and only delays, till the sins, which have provoked it, are somewhat further advanced.

the obscurity of his style. Hosea prophesied during the reigns of the four kings of Judah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; the duration of his ministry, therefore, in whatever manner we calculate, must include a very considerable space of time; we have now only a small volume of his remaining, which, it seems, contains his principal prophecies; and these are extant in a continued series, with no marks of distinction as to the times in which they were published, or the subjects of which they treat. There is therefore no cause to wonder, if, in perusing the prophecies of Hosea, we sometimes find ourselves in a similar predicament with those who consulted the scattered leaves of the Sybil."

On the prophecy of Joel it is necessary to say but a few words; the plan of the book being as clear as both the outline and filling up are beautiful. According to the inscription, he was the son of a certain Pethuel;* but of which kingdom he was a native, and in what age he lived, is left to be matter of inference from his book. From that it appears,† that he prophesied to, or addressed, the kingdom of the two southern tribes. And from the fact, that, in mentioning the enemies of his nation, he speaks,‡ like Amos, of Egypt, Idumæa, and the Philistine cities, without alluding to the Assyrians or Chaldeans, from whose invasions Judea suffered in the later period of its history, it is inferred, with considerable probability, that he lived as early or earlier than the time of Hezekiah, and might have

* There is no authority whatever for the Rabbinical notion, which confounds the prophet with the son of Samuel, of the same name, mentioned in 1 Sam. viii. 2; nor for another, according to which he was that son of the Shunamite woman, related, in 2 Kings iv. 18 *et seq.*, to have been raised to life by Elisha.

† Joel ii. 1, 15, 23, 32; iii. 1, 6, 17, 20.

‡ iii. 4, 19.

been a contemporary of the two prophets already discussed.

An invasion of the country by locusts, an animal which often, in the East, occasions the most extensive and ruinous ravages, having taken place in the time of Joel, the prophet takes occasion from it to exhort the people to humble themselves before God in penitence and prayer, and represents God as declaring to them, that he will not only withdraw the present evil, and restore the fertility and plenty which have been interrupted, but that, waiting, as he is, to be gracious, he will subsequently visit them with all further national blessings, proceeding to fulfill for them, in the later days, all the purposes which his benignant providence has entertained in their behalf. His people having reconciled themselves to him by repentance and obedience, he will send those times of signal national prosperity, for which every devout Jew was looking. He would cause great political revolutions to take place, in the sequel of which, the peace, prosperity, and greatness of Judah should be immovably established.

Such is the subject of the book, which is treated in the highest style of art. The description of the march of the locusts, like successive marshalled divisions of a hostile army, who find the land "like the garden of Eden before them," and leave it "behind them a desolate wilderness," is profuse with a gorgeous magnificence of poetical embellishment, while, at the same time, it descends into an extended and complicated detail of description; and, while the language is of the boldest and most impassioned character, it is never seen to violate, by exaggeration, the modesty of perfect taste.*

* Joel i. 2 - ii. 11. — For various particulars in the natural history of the locust, illustrating the propriety of the imagery used by Joel, see

From the description of this plague, the prophet proceeds, as was said, to exhort the people to seek deliverance from it by fasting, prayer, and all signs of remorse, and sincere pledges of amendment. But the greatness of the occasion demands, that it should be sought in the most solemn manner. None of the people should absent themselves from the solemnity. The old should come in their infirmity, and infants in their unconsciousness, and the bridegroom and the bride from the nuptial festivity, while the priests should fill the sacred place with their weeping train, and importune Heaven with prayers.* It will not be in vain. Jehovah will remove (as he is represented as orally promising) "the northern host" of pestiferous insects, and send rain, and restore fruitfulness and abundance.†

In the course of this representation, occurs an instance of the use of a phrase, which is constantly coming before us in these books, to which I would call attention, in connexion with the view which has been already proposed of its force. It is said "*Jehovah uttereth his voice* before his army."‡ Does any one think of understanding this literally? Does any one interpret it otherwise than as a poetical representation, signifying, that the coming of the locusts, — his army, — is a kind of proclamation, which Jehovah makes, of his own presence, or that he gives his summons to the locusts to do their work? Yet, if we are to be determined, by the mere structure of such sentences, to a

Bochart, "Hierozoicon," Pars ii. Lib. iv. cap. 4. — The phrase, *the day of Jehovah*, is used (Joel i. 15) in this connexion, agreeably to the practice of the sacred writers, of calling by this name any divine judgment, whether it be inflicted supernaturally, or in the order of God's common providence. Comp. ii. 1, 3, 11. — In i. 20, a drought is spoken of. Pliny says ("Hist. Nat.," Lib. xi. cap. 29), that it is in droughts that locusts abound.

* Joel ii. 12 – 17.

† ii. 18 – 26.

‡ ii. 11.

literal interpretation of them, such an interpretation is just as much demanded here as in the following verse, for instance, where it is said,

“ Yet even now, saith Jehovah,
Turn ye unto me with all your heart ; ”

or in other places, where the prophet's rehearsing of what he represents Jehovah to have said, has been thought to denote, that he was representing himself as charged, by Jehovah, with a supernatural commission. Again; a little further on, it is declared, “ Jehovah will answer and say unto his people, ‘ Behold I will send you corn,’ ” &c.* Will any one venture to understand the prophet as here declaring himself to be acquainted with words, which Jehovah would utter at some future time? Yet to interpret differently is to abandon the erroneous rule of exposition, which would require us, when a prophet says, that Jehovah has spoken, to understand a literal communication to have been intended.†

The passage, which constitutes the last chapter of Joel in the Hebrew, but which embraces a few verses of the second according to the arrangement in our

* Joel ii. 19.

† When, in ii. 17, the priests are represented as praying thus ;

“ Spare thy people, O Jehovah !
And give not thine inheritance to reproach,
And to be a by-word to the nations ; ”

the meaning is, “ Do not suffer thy people, driven from their homes by want, to appear in other nations in the contemned character of fugitives and menials ; ” and, so understood, the correspondence between it and ii. 19 is manifest. — From the language in ii. 20, “ I will remove from you the northern host,” some commentators have argued for a figurative interpretation of the army of locusts, so as to make it signify the Assyrians, on the ground, that locusts do not come from the north. But this appears to be altogether an error, as may be seen in Bochart, or in Newcome (“ Attempt towards an Improved Version,” &c.), *ad loc.* Rosenmüller, in his commentary, quotes a passage from Jerome, satisfactorily illustrating the latter part of the same verse.

version, clearly relates to the coming time of the Messiah, according to the conception entertained of it by Joel and his contemporaries, though the Messiah personally is not mentioned. It is likewise cited, as having reference to that period, by St. Peter, in his discourse on the day of Pentecost.* "God," says the prophet, "when you shall have repented of the sins, which now estrange him from you, will send those happy times, which his mercy has in store for our nation; days when, as we all believe, mingled political and religious blessings will satisfy the best wishes of God's chosen; when his own spirit will pervade the people; when, the needful changes of empire having preceded, independence shall be established in Mount Zion for its children, and all who, with them, shall call upon Jehovah's name; when a heavy retaliation of defeat and captivity shall be visited upon the nations who have persecuted Judah. Then will Jehovah manifest himself gloriously, in his holy place, as the guardian God of Israel; and, while Egypt and Edom are made a waste for their cruelty to his people, he will bless them henceforward with an unexampled abundance, and with the joy of his perpetual presence."†

* Acts ii. 16, *et seq.*

† The language in Joel iii. 1, "When I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem," might raise a doubt, whether the book was not written after the event, commonly known by the name of the Captivity; but it is a doubt, which a comparison with iii. 4-6, will remove. These verses make it clear, that the captives spoken of were such as had been taken in wars with Judah by the bordering nations, and sold into distant countries. — In iii. 6 (יָוָנִים, *quasi* Ionians), I take the word *Javanites* to be properly rendered *Grecians*; nor are we to wonder to find them, as early as Joel's time, carrying on a commerce with the Phœnician cities. Ezekiel, indeed (xxvii. 13), mentions the Javanites among those, whose traffic had anciently contributed to the opulence of Tyre. — The allusion in Joel iii. 2-12, is to the great success, accorded to Jehoshaphat over the people of Ammon, Moab, and Seir, which is recorded

“Joel,” says Lowth, in his criticism upon the style of this prophet, “is elegant, perspicuous, copious, and fluent; he is also sublime, animated, and energetic. In the first and second chapters, he displays the full force of the prophetic poetry, and shows how naturally it inclines to the use of metaphors, allegories, and comparisons. Nor is the connexion of the matter less clear and evident, than the complexion of the style.”

in 2 Chron. xx. 20 *et seq.* The meaning is, The enemies of Israel shall meet again a doom like what some of them then encountered; and the allusion owes part of its force to the composition of the word *Jehoshaphat*, which means, *God will judge*. — In the first part of Joel iii. 16, I think that the common version, and Bishop Newcome's, are right (though our learned countryman, Dr. Noyes, differs from them) in rendering the verbs in the future tense;

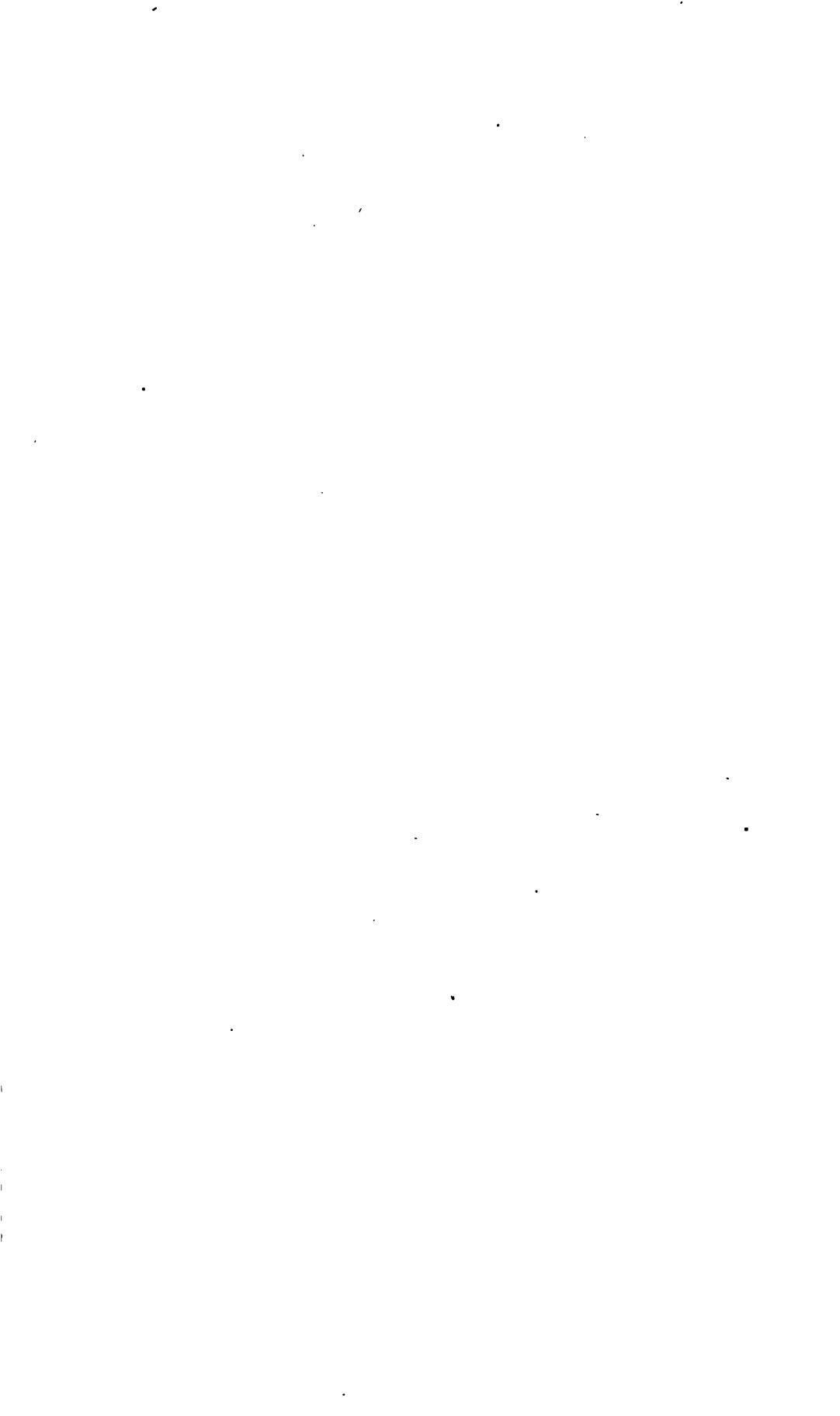
“Jehovah also shall roar from Zion,
And utter his voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and the earth shall shake.”

I understand, that, in this verse, the Lord is represented as speaking of himself in the third person, just as in ii. 21, 23, iii. 11, and that so the discourse, which the prophet introduces him as beginning at ii. 19, is continued to the end of the book. — The verse, iii. 16, gives occasion for the same remark which I made upon Amos i. 2; going to show, that representations, which we meet with in these writings, of God's speaking, are not, *ex vi termini*, to be literally understood, inasmuch as, in some instances, the context makes it impossible so to understand them.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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